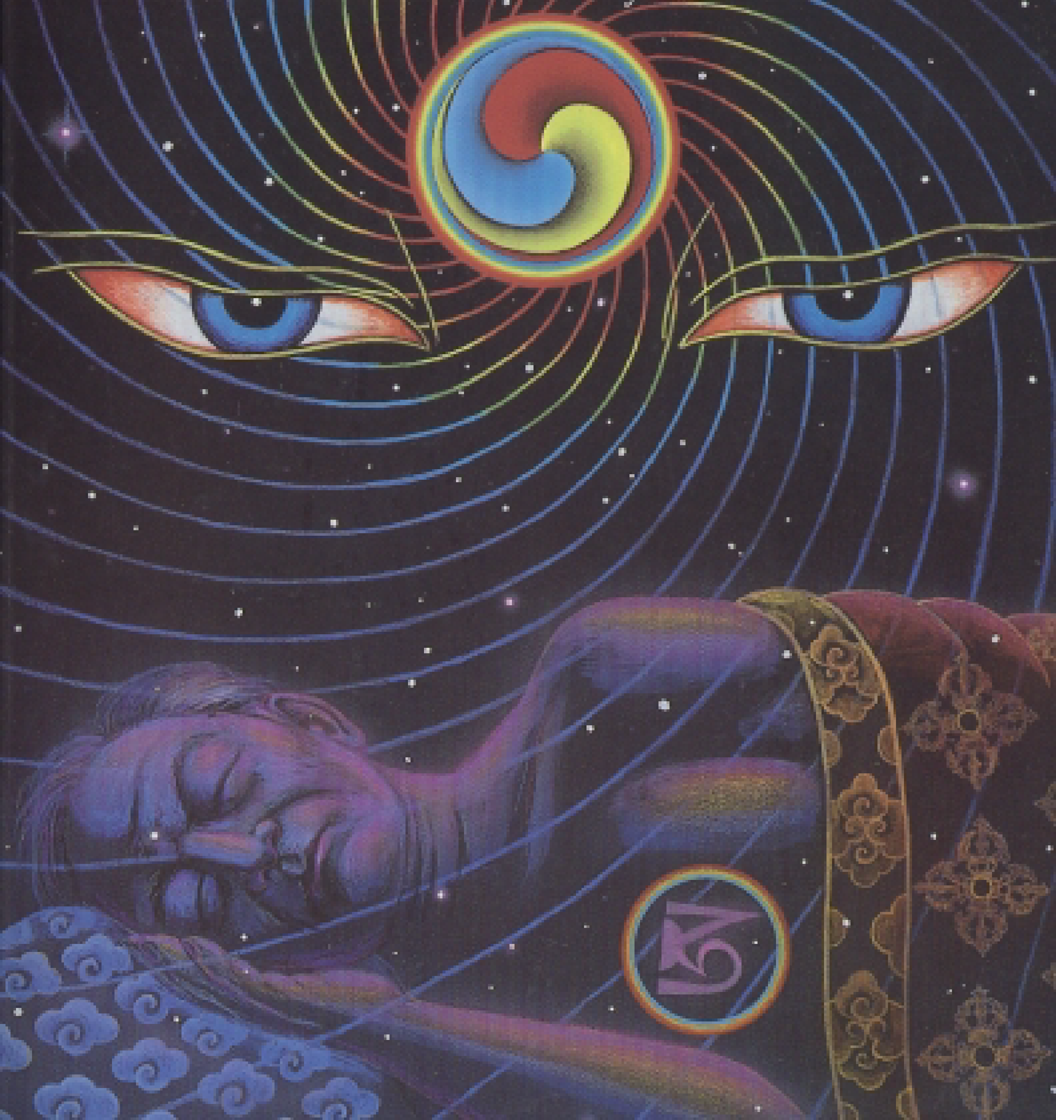
DREAM YOGA AND THE PRACTICE OF NATURAL LIGHT

NAMKHAI NORBU

Edited and Introduced by Michael Katz



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Contents

We would like to dedicate this book to the memory of master teachers Khyentse Rinpoche, Dudjom Rinpoche and Lama Gompo Tseden. May their work and aspirations be fulfilled.

Preface

Knowing the importance and the necessity of the "Practice of the Night" I have explained many aspects of dreams in this book edited by my student Michael Katz. It is my hope that those individuals who already have an interest in dreams or who are actively working with their dreams will because of reading this become deeper in their knowledge. For those people who as yet do not have real experience with their dreams, I hope that this book will provide the cause for their knowing the importance of dreams and dreamwork.

Merigar, March 10, 1991
Iron Sheep Year, 1st month, 25th day
Chogyal Namkhai Norbu

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Editor's Introduction

On a dark night in the 1950s I raced from my bed and huddled at the door to my parents' room, frightened and still half asleep. I was perhaps five years old, and the vivid imagery of a nightmare was still fresh. It seemed real enough: a snake coiled in my bed—and my parents' reassurances that it was just a dream were little consolation.

This is one of my earliest dream memories. It was a dream that repeated again and again throughout childhood, adolescence and even occasionally now as I move to middle age. What is a dream? Is there a special significance to a dream about snakes that repeats itself? Might snakes be messengers of the unconscious, or possibly the early sexual stirrings of a child, or then again a communication from another class of beings called *nagas* (snake kings) by the Tibetans? Perhaps the dream can only be understood within the context of the life of the dreamer, and thus have a specific personal meaning.

Archetypal material, personal anxieties and concerns, foretelling of the future, communication with other dimensions of beings are all possibilities within dream, according to the masters of dreamwork. Nevertheless, this statement should be qualified by saying that few encounter this range of dream experience. For most, dreaming is simply a rehashing of the impressions of the day, within the context of the dreamer's wishes, fears and personality.

In the 1950s, despite the presence of a few philosophers and contemporary thinkers for whom dreaming held renewed interest, most Americans, myself included, viewed dreams as having little significance. This blithe state of affairs was soon changed by the upheaval of the sixties. From the crucible of collective and personal crises resulting from the dramas of the decade, and concurrent with the popularity of yoga and various meditation forms, the awareness of dreams began to reassert itself in the general culture, and in myself.

My memories of dreams from early childhood to college are little more than a blur. The vivid imagery and sharp recollections of childhood faded into fleeting images or no memory at all. But in 1978, my experience and understanding of the dream condition was radically transformed. I traveled to France to study with a renowned Tibetan lama, Dudjom Rinpoche. Among the topics he taught was dream yoga. Rinpoche spoke clearly about the need to strive for awareness even within the sleeping state. He compared the current sleeping state of mankind with the unconscious sleep of an animal. He lamented the waste of such a precious opportunity for developing oneself. I left the tent where the teachings were conducted in a strange state. All that I saw or heard seemed dreamlike, no doubt due to the great lama's powerful transmission. This unfamiliar perception lasted the entire day and into the evening, when I prepared to go to sleep.

I resolved to follow Rinpoche's instructions for developing awareness and prayed for his assistance. That night was unusual also. I fell asleep, but soon became aware that I was sleeping. I lay in a conscious luminous state. It was my first conscious experience of yogic sleep and the natural light of the mind.

Due to my own mind's obscurations, I did not make great progress in the practice of dream yoga and the practice of natural light. In fact, were it not for the one experience I had had, I probably would have relegated the whole topic to the realm of yogic feats, beyond the capacity of ordinary people. It was some years later, during a twenty-one day solitary retreat, that I had another experience with yogic dreaming that was exciting and transformative. After two weeks had elapsed, my retreat had deepened considerably. Each night I followed Dudjom Rinpoche's instructions for developing the capacity for dream yoga. The intensive meditation practice extended to ten hours a day, and my mind became stronger. I was fascinated to be able to remember as many as eight dreams a night.

On this particular night, I suddenly had the realization that I was both asleep and aware that I was dreaming. At the instant of the realization, the colors of the dreamscape became startlingly

vivid and intense. I found myself standing on a cliff and looking out over a vast and beautiful valley. I felt relaxed and thrilled, and I reminded myself it was only a dream.

I looked out over the lovely vista for a short time and then resolved to go a step further, literally and figuratively. If it was truly a dream then there would be no reason why I couldn't fly. I leapt into space but, instead of flying, I found the dream transforming once again. Still lucid, my awareness appeared to be on a stairway. My body was no longer in the dream but I was moving up the stairs. I had gone up one step and was making my way up another when the dream changed again. This time it was just black with no imagery whatsoever. I resisted the impulse to open my eyes. In truth, I was uncertain what to do, but I wished and willed the imagery to return and then suddenly I was back on the stairway. This recurrence of the stairway imagery lasted only momentarily and then I awoke.

The whole experience had been fascinating. I still consider it one of the most meaningful experiences of my life. The lama who supervised the retreat likened my experience to having passed a driving test. Subsequently, I have had many lucid experiences during dream. I can't say that they occur each night, but they do occur regularly. Their frequency increases during times when I practice meditation intensively, such as when in retreat. Also, if I awaken and practice meditation during the night I find that I frequently have lucid dreams upon returning to sleep.

Over the course of time, I have also had dreams that were psychic in nature. For example, while on retreat, I dreamt of my lover. Although I was not lucid during the dream, my recollection was clear. Her image appeared. She was luminous, radiant, and yet she was sobbing. I had made plans to pick her up at a train station in upstate New York the next day. To test my dream experience, I told her that I was very sorry she had been distraught the previous night. Her look of surprise told me instantly that the dream was accurate. She told me that she had been ill and had indeed cried bitterly.

As I mentioned, it seemed clear that these experiences increased when I had the opportunity to practice meditation or the dream yoga instructions intensively. It was during such a period that I joined Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche for a seminar in Washington, D.C. He had been traveling with one of his oldest students and she had become seriously ill. In my dream, I found myself with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. He was very preoccupied with the student's health crisis. I said, "Rinpoche, she's dying." Rinpoche replied, "No, I've treated her, and she's getting better." The next day the good news was that she was indeed recovering, but even more startling was Norbu's awareness of our dream conversation before I told him about it. Later I had other dreams where Norbu was talking with me, and occasionally I would also say something intelligent in return. Norbu would take great interest in these experiences, and sometimes the next day would ask me if I had had an interesting dream the previous night. Occasionally he would ask me, and if I only vaguely remembered, he would say, "You must, you must try to remember."

Not long ago I visited my parents' house. They have lived there for my entire life. I slept in the same room where I slept as a child. As I slept, I had a dream that there was a snake in the bed with me. Rather than threatening me it seemed to want to cuddle like a pet. Although I was not completely lucid, I recall wondering what to do with this friendly though clearly uninvited snake. Upon awakening, I thought about this dream and its meaning at some length. Perhaps I had become more comfortable with that which was once fearful. Then again, I remembered Norbu's comment that with increased clarity, dreams might come to be something like a United Nations conference. Might the dream snake have been a "delegate"? For it is Norbu's contention that there are many classes of beings with whom it is possible to communicate within the dream state.

Countless theories have been developed to account for the universally shared set of experiences we call dreaming. Although these theories may differ radically regarding the origin and significance of dreams, there is widespread agreement that many dreams are mysterious, powerful, and

creative.

Dreams have held a central place in many societies. In many cultures the importance of dreaming was taken for granted, and the ability to remember or even consciously alter a dream was nurtured. Dreams have figured prominently—sometimes centrally—in religions, assisted on the hunt, inspired sacred patterns for arts and crafts, and provided guidance in times of war, crisis, or illness. The dreamer of a “big dream” was frequently referred to as a priest or priestess, a title earned by virtue of their having been blessed by the gods.

Ancient Egyptians and other traditional peoples systematically interpreted dreams for the purpose of deciphering messages from the gods. Egyptian priests called “masters of the secret things” were considered intermediaries. With the advent of writing, the knowledge of dream interpretation was recorded. An early book on dream interpretation, written in Egypt some two thousand years before the common era, is contained in what is now called the Chester Beatty papyrus.

In many cultures, dreamers preparing to receive an important or healing dream participate in elaborate rituals. These rituals, widespread in early history, are especially well documented in Native American societies as well as in Asia, and in ancient Babylon, Greece, and Rome. Invocational or “incubation” ceremonies would feature rituals guided by trained initiates, and frequently took place in special temples built on important and beautiful sacred sites.

After making offerings to the gods or a sacrifice for purification, the dream seeker would sometimes drink potions to enhance the experience. Depending on the culture, the ingredients for these potions might include a variety of psychotropic drugs.[1] The sacred places were often selected through the esoteric science of geomancy or through a priest’s psychic revelation. The site of these temples was particularly important to the ancient Greeks, for example, because their chthonic deities[2] were believed to reside in special locations.

All aspects of the temples themselves were designed to mobilize and heighten the workings of the unconscious mind as well as spirits. For example, in Greece the cult of the oracle god Aesclepius[3] was symbolized by the snake, and dream seekers would often sleep in a place where snakes moved about freely. After the elaborate rituals, Aesclepius frequently appeared to the dreamer as a bearded man or as an animal, and in many instances the individual would awaken cured. At the height of their popularity, these Aesclepian centers for dream incubation numbered in the hundreds.

Instances of healing through rituals such as this are also widespread in contemporary shamanic cultures.[4] For example, Richard Grossinger, author of numerous books on dream ethnography, cites Native American sources from among the Crow, Blackfoot, Kwakiutl and Winnebago tribes recounting dreams in which an animal or bird, such as a snake or loon, appeared and taught cures which when applied in waking life were found to have healing power.

Dreams have also inspired important scientific advances. Perhaps the most celebrated of these is the discovery of the molecular structure of benzene by Kekule. His account:

My mind was elsewhere.. .I turned the chair to the fireplace, and fell half asleep. Again the atoms gamboled in front of my eyes. Smaller groups this time kept mostly in the background. My mind’s eye, trained by repeated visions of the same sort, now distinguished larger formations of various shapes. Long chains.. .everything in movement, twisting and turning like snakes. And look what was that? One snake grabbed its own tail, and mockingly the shape whirled before my eyes. I awoke as if struck by lightning; this time again I spent the rest of the night working out its consequences.

The Russian chemist Mendelev discovered the periodic table method of classifying elements according to atomic weight while dreaming. Elias Howe completed his invention of the sewing machine while dreaming. Albert Einstein’s theory of relativity came to him partly in a dream. Other dream-inspired creations include literary masterpieces such as Dante’s *Divine Comedy,*

Voltaire's *Candide*, "The Raven" by Poe and *Ulysses* by James Joyce. Robert Louis Stevenson was able to formulate stories while dreaming, which he later wrote down and published. Even some popular music compositions by Billy Joel and Paul McCartney have come in dreams.

Such unusual dreams notwithstanding, our society as a whole has lost touch with the art of dreaming. Recently, however, a widespread interest in the creative power of dreams has surfaced, emerging from several divergent disciplines, including science, western depth psychology, the increasing awareness of native cultures, and religion.

Science And Dream Phenomena

The modern scientific description of dream phenomena has followed upon the discoveries in 1952 of Kleitman and his students that dreaming is accompanied by rapid eye movements. Other facts about dreaming have emerged through more recent experimentation. For example, we know that all people dream and that approximately twenty-five percent of sleep is dream time. Dreams are crucial for mental health, dreaming is a right-brain activity, and virtually all dreams are accompanied by rapid eye movements. Sleep has four stages, or depths, but dreaming occurs only in the first stage. We also know that we move through the four stages of sleep several times in a typical night, and consequently we normally dream many times each night. It has been observed that a person who is deprived of dream time will make up for it in subsequent nights. A greater percentage of sleeping time is spent dreaming as we approach dawn.

Let us focus on the phenomenon of lucid dreams, those unusual dreams in which the dreamer finds him- or herself suddenly self-consciously aware or "lucid" while dreaming. Once frequently dismissed but now scientifically verified, reports of lucid dreaming have existed in literature for thousands of years. For example, Aristotle made the following statement: ".. .for often when one is asleep there is something in consciousness which declares that what presents itself is but a dream."[5]

In the early 1900s a Dutch psychiatrist by the name of Van Eeden studied this phenomenon in a systematic fashion and coined the term "lucid dreaming" to describe it. Before him, the Marquis d'Hervey de Saint Denys had investigated dream phenomena and published his findings in 1867 in the book *Dreams and How to Guide Them.* In this book Saint Denys described his ability to awaken within his dreams as well as to direct them.

Steven Laberge, a modern researcher of dream phenomena, developed a methodology that utilizes the rapid eye movements (R.E.M.) that accompany dreaming, in order to train lucidity.[6] In one study subjects listened to a recording that repeated the phrase "this is a dream" every few seconds. This was played after the beginning of each R.E.M. period. He then asked his sleeping subjects to signal their lucidity by moving their eyes in a prearranged pattern. Approximately twenty percent of his subjects were able to achieve lucidity in their dream state through this technique. More recently Laberge has invented a "dream light" device which is worn on the face like a mask and detects the rapid eye movements that are associated with dreaming. The rapid eye movements trigger a low-intensity pulsing red light which can cue the dreamer that he or she is dreaming.

The following account, by a participant in a dream awareness seminar, serves to illustrate the phenomenon of being awake or lucid within a dream:

On Wednesday morning, January 13, 1988, I became aware that I was dreaming; and I decided that the best thing to do would be to fly in the sky. I hitched myself to a jet and we went very high into the stratosphere. I then had the jet reverse course so I could hang from it and see the world. I looked down and saw the earth as a great sphere. Then I dropped my hold and stretched my arms out wide to glide better. I stayed quite high (literally and figuratively) in the sky, in order to realize the immensity and beauty of this vast ocean as seen from above.

After a short period I glided down lower, very slowly, finding myself over a beautiful island. This island view was pleasing to me. It was early morning; quiet and even light allowed for clear sight of

the still masts of the many yachts docked at the harbor. Beyond their tall poles and white decks, there stood hillside mountains with homes built right into them. It was a splendid and majestic sight, the yachts and mountains in clear, even morning light. It was reminiscent of a combination of two places I had been before. In Paxos, Greece there are harbored many yachts, and Martin City, California there are homes built into the hills. I continued to view this sight before I fell into a more general type of dreaming in which I didn't control the view or determine what I would like to do.

The preceding account is typical insofar as lucid dreams frequently include flying. On some occasions the dreamer is first aware that he or she is flying, and then suddenly becomes lucid. On other occasions the dreamer becomes lucid and subsequently tries to fly. Another common feature that this dreamer shares with other lucid dreamers is the sense of heightened color and emotion, the sense of participating in an awe some and magnificent experience.

Not all lucid dreams are so expansive, however. Kenneth Kelzer, an author and lucid dreamer, comments upon the persistent theme of being within a jail which characterizes one series of lucid dreams he had. "The symbol of the jail cell in these three dreams provided me with an essential reminder that I am still a prisoner, still working to attain that fullness of mental freedom to which I aspire."[7]

Dreams And Depth Psychology

In the past century, the frenzied expansion of industrial technology occurred at a great price. For complex reasons it helped to spawn the great world wars. The wide scale destruction and loss of life resulted in a questioning of values—especially those of a religious and moral nature. Against the specter of apocalypse, the despair of meaninglessness, and the perceived ruins of western religious ceremony, contemporary thinkers sought to understand the workings of the psyche by studying less conscious phenomena such as fantasy and dream—thus developing the approach of depth psychology. Evoking and developing awareness of unconscious processes was perceived as valuable for healing the weary, confused soul.

Sigmund Freud, the founder of modern western psychology, called dream work the "royal road to the unconscious," and helped reawaken interest in dreaming. Freud's seminal work, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, represented a radical departure from previous contemporary Western psychiatric theory. Freud asserted that dreams are symbolic representations of repressed wishes, most of which are sexual. Through the process of "wish fulfillment" the dreamer released the "excitement" of the impulse. He thought the dream would typically be organized in a disguised or symbolic way because these wishes or impulses were unacceptable.

Noting that a single dream might represent an enormous amount of personal material, Freud postulated that each character or element of the dream was a condensed symbol. The labyrinth of meaning might be unraveled through the process of free association. Techniques of listing all associations to a dream continue to be widely used among contemporary analysts. Less well recognized is Freud's acknowledgement of the existence of telepathy within the dream state. This was published in his lectures on psychoanalysis in 1916.[8]

Carl Jung was perhaps the first Western psychologist to be interested in Buddhism[9] and Eastern religion. Jung, once a close student of Freud, later broke away from his mentor. Jung explained that he could not accept Freud's overwhelming emphasis on a sexual root for all repressions, nor his narrow, anti-religious views. Jung considered libido to be a universal psychic energy whereas for Freud it was simply sexual energy.[10]

Jung also postulated the existence of a deep, encompassing cultural memory accessible through powerful dreams. He labeled this memory the "collective unconscious" and considered

it to be a rich and powerful repository of the collective memory of the human race.

Jung postulated that dreams generally compensate for the dreamer's imbalance in his waking life and bring that which is unconscious to consciousness. He noted that individuals function with certain characteristic styles, for example with feeling or intellect, and in an introverted or extroverted manner. If a person were primarily intellectual and his feeling side largely suppressed or unconscious, strong feelings might then manifest more frequently in his dream life. A feeling type, conversely, might have intellectual dreams in order to compensate for the dominant conscious attitude.

Fritz Perls, founder of the Gestalt school of psychology, proclaimed dreams to be the "royal road to integration." For Perls, dreaming and the awareness of dreaming were essential for coming into balance and owning all the parts of one's personality. He based his dreamwork on the supposition that facets of a dream might all be perceived as projections of parts or personas of the dreamer. Perls' contribution to dream work and therapy was his keen awareness that neurotic functioning is caused by disowning parts of oneself. He suggests that we disown or alienate ourselves by projection and/or repression. We may reclaim these unacknowledged aspects of our personalities by enacting or dramatizing parts of a dream. Through this process we recognize more fully our own attitudes, fears and wishes, thus allowing our individualization and maturation process to proceed unimpeded.

The following dramatic example of one woman's enactment of a dream part in the style of Gestalt therapy will illustrate Perls' technique of dream work. The woman recounted a dream in which a small aerosol spray can was one of many items on a dresser bureau, and she dramatized the different items in turn. When she reached the spray can, she announced, "I'm under enormous pressure. I feel as if I'm about to explode." The enactment of this dream provided swift and clear feedback regarding an unresolved issue in her life.

Another school of contemporary psychology which respects the dream experience is that represented by Medard Boss. Boss considers the dream to be a reality which should be understood as an autobiographical episode. In the process of understanding one's dreams, Boss would encourage the dreamer to actually experience and dwell within that unique moment.

Not all psychologists acknowledge the great potential for advanced dreamwork. For example, in the phenomenological school as articulated by Bross and Keny, dreams are considered to constitute a "dimmed and restricted world view," and are "privative, deficient, and constricted in comparison with waking." The object relations school as typified by Fairbairin considers dreams to be schizoid phenomena, cauldrons of anxieties, wishes, and attitudes.

Certain current scientific theories have also gone further in denying a basic meaningful organizing principle within the state of dreaming. J. Allen Hobson of Harvard Medical School proposes in his book *The Dreaming Brain* a "dream state generator" located within the brain stem. The generator when engaged fires neurons randomly and the brain attempts to make sense of these weak signals by organizing them into the dream story. Others have proposed similarly mechanistic explanations of dream phenomena. Crick and Mitehison suggest that dreams occur to unlearn useless information. Connections which are unimportant and temporarily stored are thus discharged and forgotten.

Alternate theories by Carl Sagan and others that attempt to account for the most famous creative acts which have arisen within the dream state have proposed that such dreams result from uninhibited right-brain activity. According to this theory the left-brain, which is usually dominant during the day, is suppressed during dreams. Consequently, the right-brain is less inhibited and can become spectacularly intuitive and creative. This theory would account, for

example, for Kekule's discovery of the benzene molecule as an example of the right-brain's skill at pattern recognition in contrast to the more analytic activity of the left-brain. This theory, although interesting, does not account for all types of telepathic and creative dreams.

John Grant, a specialist in dream research, recently spent considerable effort in providing explanations for dream telepathy. His conclusion after much effort in debunking sensational claims was that only ninety-five percent of dream telepathy and dreams which predict future events might be explicable according to known laws and science. His subjective statistic and inability to account for the other five percent of unusual dreams which anticipate the future fits in well with Norbu Rinpoche's theory of dream phenomena. This theory acknowledges both common dreams whose origin are our wishes and anxieties, as well as creative clarity type dreams which arise out of awareness.

Many analytic and scientific approaches still contend that the content of all dreams is merely chaotic or symbolic and comprised of a cauldron of anxieties, wishes and attitudes. Consequently, contemporary Western dream workers do not generally recognize or understand the possibilities for dream work assumed in traditional societies. While Western depth psychology works with dreams as an approach to individual mental health, its understanding of the possibilities for dream work, though improving, is still limited. The range of these other possibilities and the need for determining priorities appears when we explore dream work systems evolved in other cultures.

Dreamwork In Traditional Cultures

Systems for dreamwork and dream awareness have been found for millennia within Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism, Sufism, and traditional cultures throughout the world.[11] These dreamwork systems were and are often still cloaked in secrecy and reserved for the initiate. The recorded dream experiences of traditional peoples whose cultures are still relatively intact may help expand our understanding of the possibilities of dream work and dream awareness, including the phenomena of lucidity, telepathy, and precognitive dreams.

The Australian Aborigines believe in the existence of ancestral beings who are more powerful than most humans, and are considered to have other-than-human physical counterparts such as rocks, trees, or land formations. According to the authors of a comprehensive book on Aboriginal culture, *Dreaming, the Art of Aboriginal Australia* edited by Peter Sutton, the spiritual dimension in which these beings have their existence is described as the "Dreamtime." The ancestors, known as "Dreamings," may be contacted through dreams, though they are not considered to be a product of dreams. This underscores the Aboriginal belief in multiple classes of beings and alternate dimensions within which other classes of beings reside.

Noteworthy are the Aboriginal beliefs regarding texts, art, and songs that come in dreams. A new song, story, design, or other creative product received in a dream is perceived by the Aboriginal peoples as a reproduction of an original creation rendered by an ancestor. These artistic gifts are considered to be channeled rather than seen as original creations. Within the tribe the dreamer is revered as a conduit through which the wisdom of the ancestors is received, not as the originator of this wisdom. According to the myths and dream records of contemporary Aboriginal peoples, artistic products have come in dreams since time immemorial and continue to enrich Aboriginal culture today.

The Senoi people of what is today called Malaysia ostensibly provided a documented instance of a traditional people who placed an unusually high value on creative dream work. Patricia Garfield in her book *Creative Dreaming* presents dream techniques attributed to the Senoi by

anthropologist Kilton Stewart. According to Stewart, the Senoi focused an unusual amount of attention on dream work and developed sophisticated methods for influencing and deriving creative inspiration from dreams—through reinforcement, self suggestion, and daily discussion of their dreams. Dr. Garfield summarized the key Senoi dream work goals as follows: confronting and overcoming danger within a dream, accepting and moving towards pleasurable experiences within the dream, and making the dream have a positive or creative outcome. The integrative effects of this work may very well be a cause for a lowered frequency of mental disorder. However, later researchers did not substantiate Stewart's claim that Senoi society approached a Utopian ideal.[12]

Presumably the Senoi had strong motivation for developing control of their dreams because of the great premium their tribe placed on these abilities. Contemporary researchers report that the ability to influence dreams towards positive outcomes seems to have effects such as increased self-confidence and creativity.

The creative potential of dreams is unquestionably valued in traditional Tibetan culture. Within Tibetan Buddhism there is a class of dreams labeled *Milam Ter* or "dream treasure." These treasures are teachings that are considered to be the creations of enlightened beings. The teachings were purposefully hidden or stored in order to benefit future generations. As a demonstration of their wisdom the originators of these treasures often prophesied the name of their discoverer and the time of discovery.

Buddhist and Bonpo[13] systems for dream awareness training appear to be thousands of years old, according to Norbu Rinpoche and Lopon Tenzin Namdak.[14] In the interview presented in this book Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche comments that dream awareness training was discussed extensively in the text of the inconceivably ancient *Mahamaya Tantra*, whose author is unknown. Khenpo Palden Sherab, a renowned Buddhist scholar, agrees that the tantras are inconceivably ancient. According to Khenpo, many millennia before the historical Buddha Shakyamuni lived, the tantras were taught by the buddhas of past eras to both human and nonhuman beings.

Consider, for example, the extraordinary dream experience Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche had while on retreat in Massachusetts in the summer of 1990. On night after night a woman whom Rinpoche considered to be a *dakini*[15] appeared in his dream and taught him a complex series of dances with intricate steps for up to thirty-six dancers. Day after day Rinpoche transcribed the lessons from the dreams of the night before. He also taught a group of his students parts of this dance, which accompany a special song for deepening meditation. The tune itself had been received in another dream years earlier. Having heard firsthand accounts of these dreams, and having participated in this exquisite dance, I can only say that Rinpoche's experience is profound beyond words.

Shortly after Rinpoche's retreat he was visited by a Native American teacher who goes by the name of Thunder. Thunder is the descendent of a long lineage of Native American medicine men and healers. After hearing accounts of Rinpoche's dance and examining photos of our attempts to learn it, she noted its similarity to the Native American Ghost Dance.

The following series of dreams related by Norbu Rinpoche may serve to illustrate the human potential within the dream state as awareness develops.

In 1959 I had already fled Tibet to the country of Sik-kim. The situation within Tibet was deteriorating rapidly. As the news of killings and destruction reached us I became increasingly worried about the members of my family who remained in Tibet. Many of us prayed to Tara asking for her help. It was during this period that I had the following dream:

I was walking through a mountainous area. I remember the beautiful trees and flowers. Near the road on which I was traveling there were wild animals, but they were peaceful and gentle to me. I was aware that I was enroute to Tara's temple located on a mountain ahead. I arrived at a place near the temple, where there was a small field with many trees and red flowers. There was also a young girl approximately eleven or twelve years old.

When the young girl saw me she immediately gave me a red flower, and inquired where I was going. I replied, "I am going to the temple of Tara in order to pray for Tibet." In response she said, "There is no need for you to go to the temple; just say this prayer." She then repeated a prayer to me many times that began, "Om Jet-summa...." I began to say this prayer, repeating it as I was holding the flower. I repeated the prayer again and again. I actually woke myself up by saying this prayer so loudly.

Some years later I had a related dream. In this dream, I again found myself in the field that marked the approach to the temple of Tara. It was the same as the previous dream, but there was no young girl. I looked ahead of me, and there was the temple at the top of a mountain. I continued my journey until I arrived. It was a simple temple, not elegantly designed or decorated. It was open to the East.

I entered and noticed that upon the wall was a painting of the Shitro mandala of the one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities. On bookshelves there were many Tibetan books, including the Tanjur and Kanjur. I was looking over the collection when I noticed a Tibetan man at the door. He was dressed somewhat like a lama, but not completely. He asked me, "Did you see the speaking Tara?"

I replied that I had not yet seen the speaking Tara, but that I would like to. The man then led me to a room with statues. As he turned towards the door to leave, he said, "There is the speaking Tara." I didn't see anything at first, but then I noticed that the man was looking upwards to the top of a column. I followed his gaze, and there at the top of the column was a statue of Green Tara. She was represented as a child of perhaps seven or eight years. It was a nice statue, but I didn't hear it speak, and subsequently I awakened.

The next chapter in this story was not a dream at all. In 1984 I was traveling in northern Nepal heading towards Tolu Monastery, when I recognized the field where in my dream the girl had given me the flower and prayer. I looked ahead and there was the temple. When I arrived, everything was exactly the same as in my dream. I walked over to the column, and looked for the "speaking Tara." It wasn't there. That was the only detail that differed. Not too long ago, I heard that one of my students had presented the temple with a statue of Green Tara which they placed on top of the column as a sort of commemoration. If you travel to that temple today you can see it there.

Developing Dream Awareness

The possibility of developing awareness within the dream state and of subsequently having intensely inspiring experiences as well as the ability to control dreams is well documented. It is the pathway to higher order dreaming made possible by the practices outlined later in this book.[16] Cross-cultural parallels point very strongly to the existence of a class of dream experiences which have fueled the advance of mankind's cultural and religious progress. These dreams, which Norbu Rinpoche refers to as clarity dreams, seem to arise out of intense mental concentration upon a particular problem or subject, as well as through meditation and ritual. Startling, creative or transcendent outcomes often emerge from these special dreams, some of which may be channeled.

In a dream awareness seminar I conducted in 1989, a participant recounted the following dream: “When I was a young child I used to have a recurring dream of being threatened by an old ugly dwarf who was terrifying to me. Each time he would appear I would either run away in that nightmarish manner of not seeming to get anywhere, or pretend to faint just to get away from him. Finally during one dream I became very annoyed and decided I was tired of being threatened. I turned on him and told him he was just part of my dream. When I did that I wasn’t frightened of him anymore. The dream never recurred after that.”

Even my own relatively minor dream experiences have occasionally seemed to support the possibility of dreams that predict the future. For example, last year I attended a sporting event with two friends. I was impressed by the colorful stadium. That night I dreamt of a baseball player. His picture was on the front page of a newspaper. I tried to read and remember the print. By the next morning I only recalled the name Clark. Upon awakening I purchased the New York Times, as is my habit, and discovered a photograph of Will Clark, a baseball player, on the front page. Perhaps you might argue that this was coincidental. If so, you would be making the same argument that Aristotle used in order to counter Heraclitus who believed in precognitive dreaming (just to illustrate how long the controversy has raged). Regardless of whether my dream about Will Clark was truly prophetic, I personally have come to believe that within the higher order creative class of dreams, there is a category predictive of the future.

If this is actually the case it would suggest that the future is somehow available in the present. Within Tibetan Buddhist, Bonpo, and other traditions, enlightened beings are considered to have the capacity to see the past, present, and future.

If there is indeed significant evidence of a class of higher order dreams, questions arise concerning how one may develop the capacity for them and whether or not there are reasons (beyond their ability to increase creativity) to cultivate this capacity. According to the Tibetan Dzogchen tradition, the key to working with dreams is the development of greater awareness within the dream state. It is this degree of awareness that differentiates ordinary dreaming from the ultimate fruit of total realization with the dream state. Norbu Rinpoche discusses this difference in his chapter on the practice of the natural light.

Over the course of a typical night, as much as eight hours may be spent sleeping, of which two or more hours might be spent dreaming. Are we able to remember dreams from each of these sessions? How precisely do we remember details? An individual with no awareness of her or his dreams, who is largely unable to remember, has sacrificed awareness of a large portion of her or his life. This person is missing the opportunity both to explore the rich and fertile depths of the psyche as well as to grow spiritually. Consider the message of this Buddhist prayer:

When the state of dreaming has dawned,
Do not lie in ignorance like a corpse.
Enter the natural sphere of unwavering attentiveness.
Recognize your dreams and transform illusion into luminosity.
Do not sleep like an animal. Do the practice which mixes sleep and reality.

There is no doubt that lucid dreams and clarity experiences are fascinating occurrences which seemingly have positive benefits for self-esteem, integration of personality, and overcoming of fear. It is also critical to place their occurrence within the context of the quest for spiritual transformation or enlightenment. Insofar as a culture such as ours tends to value experience for experience’s sake, there is the danger of missing the forest for the trees.

One lama from the Tibetan Buddhist tradition likened the pursuit of lucid dream experience to mere play and games except when it arises as the by-product of an individual's development of meditative clarity through the Dzogchen night practice of the white light or Tantric dream yoga. Although there does seem to be relative value in lucid dream experience, from the Buddhist perspective its usefulness is limited unless the individual knows how to apply the lucid awareness in the after-death states of the Chonyid and Sipa Bardos.

In the Dzogchen school, which for millennia has been familiar with lucid dream experiences as well as such parapsychological phenomena as telepathy and precognition, there is the constant advice from teacher to student that one must not be attached to experience. This counters the Western trend to value experience for its own sake. Western approaches also encourage a systematic analysis of the content of dreams, whereas Dzogchen teachers encourage practitioners not to dwell upon dream phenomena.

Although there seem to be clear relative benefits from the extensive examination of dream material, it is quite possible that these benefits are only for the beginner. For the advanced practitioner, awareness itself may ultimately be far more valuable than the experience and content, no matter how creative. Great teachers have reported that dreams cease completely when awareness becomes absolute, to be replaced by luminous clarity of an indescribable nature.

The presentation of techniques for dreamwork from these ancient traditions is important because these traditions are in danger of extinction. Although there have been many books written on the general topic of dreams, there has still been relatively little that would serve to bring dream work into the spiritual context. Buddhist, Bonpo and Taoist teachers have acknowledged to me that this situation has influenced their decisions to teach more openly.

In a personal way, this project served to focus my attention on the power and richness of maintaining awareness during the often-neglected sleep time. Regardless of our material circumstances, if we cultivate this capacity we possess a wish-fulfilling jewel. In the West the scientific exploration of sleep and dreams is quite new, but within the larger community of humankind the arcane science of dream awareness and exploration has been cherished for millennia.

Pioneer psychologists of the twentieth century have commented upon dream phenomena. Sigmund Freud called dreams "the royal road to the unconscious," and Fritz Perls called them the "royal road to integration." In their way these assertions may be true, but they are overshadowed by the possibility that the awareness of dreams is a path to enlightenment.

I am grateful for the opportunity to help chronicle the extraordinary dream experiences and teachings on the dream state of Dzogchen master Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.

Michael Katz
New York City
April 23, 1991

Notes To The Introduction

1. Psychotropic drugs affect the mind, sometimes inducing visions or hallucinations. Used by shamans in native cultures to make contact with the spirit world, the drugs are frequently employed to assist in rituals for healing. Examples of such drugs are peyote and certain types of mushroom and cactus. [return]

2. Chthonic deities were considered to live below the earth and were associated with agriculture and the fertility of the land. They were worshipped by the pre-Greek speaking people who were of a matriarchal culture. These deities may be related to the local guardians whom the Tibetans believe reside in specific locations. [return]

3. Aesclepius (called Aesculapius by the Romans) was considered to be a son of Apollo and was raised by the immortal centaur Chiron in his cave. Aesclepius became a great physician and left Chiron's cave to help the people of Greece. As he was a remarkable healer, the Greeks ultimately worshipped him as a god and built temples to honor him. Inside these temples Aesclepius ostensibly put beds for the sick, thus establishing the first hospitals. He walked about with a stick entwined with sacred serpents (the modern symbol for medicine), who were said to know the causes and cures of disease. Sometimes he put his patients to sleep with a "magic draught" and listened to what they said in their dreams. Often their words explained what was causing the ailment, and from this information he could offer a cure. Priests continued to invoke him after his death, and he continued to appear in dreams of those who were ill, offering them healing advice. [return]

4. The word *shaman* is a Siberian term deriving from the classical form of shamanism in North Asia. Through rituals, chanting, drumming and psychotropic drugs, shamans go into trance for the purposes of healing and of divination. [return]

5. From *The Works of Aristotle Translated into English*, ed. W.D. Ross (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), Vol. 1, Chapter 1, "De Divinatione Per Somnum," p.462a. [return]

6. Laberge, Kelzer and other dream researchers have sought to develop and compile methods for inducing lucid dreaming. These include entering lucid dreaming directly through focusing on naturally occurring hypnogogic imagery which occurs prior to the onset of sleep (see Kelzer, *The Sun and the Shadow*, page 144), and auto-suggestion that the dreamer will immediately become lucid upon recognizing incongruities within the dream state. For example, the editor recently had a dream in which he noticed that both a man and a dog who had attempted to jump from one roof to another and missed were falling in a way that was incongruent with the laws of gravity. The awareness of this incongruity sparked a lucid dream.

Other methods include a variety of ways to utilize autosuggestion, the intention that one will be lucid in one's dreams. Steven Laberge (see *Lucid Dreaming*, pages 48-78) has been particularly active in systematizing these techniques. His mnemonic induction of lucid dreams (MILD) technique entails awakening during the night after dreaming, focusing on the details of the dream, particularly the incongruities, and making a strong suggestion that if an incongruity or dream sign reappears one will immediately become lucid. In this technique one holds the intention to become lucid immediately prior to returning to sleep. Laberge reports that the effectiveness of this technique is enhanced by the simultaneous use of technological devices such as his dreamlight goggles which flash low intensity light with the occurrence of the rapid eye movements that characterize the onset of dreaming.

Another technique discussed by various dream researchers, including Paul Tholey, involves state testing. This term refers to the practice of asking oneself if one is dreaming at frequent intervals during the day, while concurrently analyzing the situation to attempt to be sure of the

answer. The "critical state testing" (*Lucid Dreaming*, page 58) in many cases subsequently leads to a similar testing process within the dream, and then to lucidity.

These techniques that attempt to induce lucidity contrast with the practice of natural light found within the Buddhist, Bonpo and Dzogchen traditions as discussed by Norbu Rinpoche, which does not particularly focus on developing lucidity but considers lucidity a natural by-product of the development of awareness and presence. [return]

7. The descriptions of lucid dream experience as awesome and liberating or, alternatively, Kelzer's lucid dream experience of being in prison, which served to remind him of the need to work to attain "that fullness of mental expression to which I aspire," seem to echo themes within Plato's "Allegory of the Cave."

In this classic of philosophy, Plato described cave dwellers who have become accustomed to the shadowy muted reality of life within a cave. The inhabitants are unaware of the possibility of a more vibrant, spectacular reality, and doubt the probability of the sun.

Descriptions of lucid dreams that include an unusual intensity, richness of color, and other sense impressions may suggest a "taste of enlightenment." Perhaps the dreamer has momentarily broken the habitual conditioned modes which typically govern perception, referred to within the allegory as living within a cave. [return]

8. In addition, there is support for the contention that Freud knew about lucid dreaming and made reference to types of lucid dream experience. See "Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis" in *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, standard edition (New York: Hogarth Press, 1916), Vol.15, p.222. This evidence is summarized by Bol Rooksby and Sybe Tenwee in their historical article published in *Lucidity Letter, 9* (2) 1990, Edmonton, Alberta. [return]

9. Jung's interest in Buddhism and eastern philosophy was great enough for him to have written the foreword for the first translation of the classic Tibetan Buddhist book of the dead, the *Bardo Thodol.* Unfortunately, due to mistranslations within the original publication of the *Tibetan Book of Great Liberation* by Evans Wentz, Jung never had a clear understanding of the Dzogchen great perfection teaching with which the text was concerned. Evans Wentz's faulty understanding of the Dzogchen subject matter led to his improper translations, such as that of the "primordially pure nature of mind" as the "one mind."

Jung subsequently misinterpreted "the one mind" as referring to the unconscious, which it does not. The pure nature of mind was a reference to the pinnacle teaching of Buddhism, Dzogchen. The flavor of Dzogchen practice is later described in this book by Namkhai Norbu, and also within an original text by the Tibetan meditation master Mipham (1846-1914).

For a thorough discussion of the aforementioned misunderstanding, the reader is referred to the recent retranslation of the *Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation* by John Reynolds. [return]

10. It is unclear to what extent Jung was influenced in his conception of universal psychic energy by Tantric Buddhist and Taoist theories of internal energy, called "lung", "prana" and "chi" in Tibetan Buddhism, Hinduism and Taoism, respectively.

Within the Tantric system of Anu Yoga, "lung" or internal airs are said to circulate through internal channels or meridians called "tsa". According to Norbu Rinpoche and other lamas within the Dzogchen tradition, "lung" may be purified and caused to circulate along specific internal

paths. The methods for achieving these ends are elaborate breathing exercises and physical exercises. Collectively, these exercises are called Yantra Yoga, or Tsa Lung. [return]

11. It is now clear that there are many so-called primitive peoples with sophisticated ways of interpreting and manipulating dreams. What seems likely is that for thousands of years a few initiates in widely diverse cultures have practiced dream manipulation, lucid dreaming and more, while most of the population—then as now—slept unconsciously. [return]

12. Krippner, S., *Dreamtime and Dreamwork*, Preface to Chapter 5, pages 171-174. [return]

13. Bonpo/Yung-drung Bon: The teachings found in the Bonpo school derived from the Buddha Tenpa Shenrab, who appeared in prehistoric times in central Asia. *Bon* means teaching or dharma, and *Yung-drung* means the eternal or the indestructible. Yung-drung is often symbolized by a leftward spinning swastika. The leftward direction is representative of the matriarchal roots of Tibet (the left being related to feminine energy, the right to masculine). The Yung-drung is a symbol of the indestructibility of the Bon teachings just as the *dorje/vajra/diamond* scepter is the symbol of the Tantric Buddhist teachings. It is important to note that the Yung-drung bears no ideological relation or similarity to the Nazi swastika symbol.

Yung-drung Bon is also known as “New Bon.” Lopon Tenzin Namdak distinguishes two stages of the development of Bon. The first stage is the most ancient “Old Bon,” or “Primitive Bon,” which is similar to North Asian shamanism. The second stage is Yung-drung Bon with its roots in the teachings of Buddha Tenpa Shenrab.

Tenzin Namdak was born in Eastern Tibet and educated at Menri, the leading Bonpo Monastery in Central Tibet. In 1959 he became a Lopon, head of academic studies, and led an exodus of Bonpo monks from Tibet to India to escape the Communist Chinese. In the early 1960s he organized the Bonpo community in Dolangi, Himachal Pradesh, and built a monastery and a lama college there. He currently resides there as the head teacher and is the foremost native Bonpo scholar amongst Tibetans in exile. Lopon Tenzin Namdak was the informant for David Snellgrove’s *Nine Ways of Bon.* Lopon lived in England for three years in the 1960s and speaks fluent English. [return]

14. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, a meditation master who heads the Yung-drung Bon sect of the Bonpo religion, claims that the Bonpo spiritual tradition—including its dream awareness practices—may be traced back 18,000 years to an area that includes western Iran and western Tibet.

According to the Bonpo history, a superhuman being, Tenpa Shenrab, who incarnated at that time, was the originator of their religious system. For comparison, archeologists cite evidence of religious activity—burying the dead with objects— from 30,000 B.C. Further perspective may be gained by noting that the archeological remains of Cro Magnon man, which have been found throughout Africa, Europe, and from Iran to Asia, date from 100,000 B.C. [return]

15. Dakini: Tibetan, *Khadro. Kha* means space, sky; *dm* means to go. Thus the term indicates a sky/space goer. The dakini is understood to be the embodiment of wisdom, and is ultimately beyond sexual distinction but is perceived in female form. There are many classes of dakinis including wisdom dakinis, who are enlightened. Examples of these are Man-darava, Yeshe Tsogel and Vajra Yogini. There are also flesh-eating dakinis, as well as worldly dakinis, who

embody worldly female energy. Dakinis represent the energy that allows teachings to be taught. [return]

16. Included later within this book are a series of dreams by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche which he recorded while making pilgrimage to Maratika Cave in Nepal. On the pilgrimage, Norbu Rinpoche dreamed of a text more than 100 pages long, which included instructions for advanced meditation practices. Spectacularly creative dreams such as these are subsequently referred to as dreams of clarity. [return]

1 THE NATURE AND CLASSES OF DREAMS

In a *sutra* Buddha Shakyamuni[1] describes the phenomenal world that we generally consider to be real through the use of multiple metaphors. These metaphoric descriptions liken our reality to a shooting star, an optical illusion, a flickering butter lamp, dewdrops at dawn, bubbles in water, lightning, a dream, and clouds. According to the Buddha, all aggregated existence, all dharmas,[2] and in fact all phenomena are actually unreal and instantly changing like these examples.

Another sutra employs additional poetic metaphors for showing the essential nature of our unreal condition. These include the reflection of the moon in water, a mirage, a city comprised of sounds, a rainbow, a reflection in a mirror and also a dream.

The example of a dream is included in these sutras because we all know that if we examine a dream we will not find anything concrete. Even though the primary and the secondary causes for its arisal may be discovered, still there is nothing actually concrete or real about the dream itself.

Although there are many different conditions that may lead to dreaming, the product of the conditions, our dreams, may in general be grouped into two main categories: the more common types of dreams appearing from karmic traces[3] and other types of dreams appearing from the clarity of mind.

Within the category of dreams that are caused by karma, there are dreams that are mainly related to the three states of existence, i.e., the body, energy or speech, and the tensions of the mind of the individual; and there is another class which is related to karmic traces. The latter has three causes, namely, traces of karma originating in a past life, in youth, and in the recent past of the individual.

In the tradition of Tibetan medicine, a physician who is conducting an investigation as to the origin of an illness will also consider to which of the three existences the sick person’s dreams relate. With this information, he or she can discover the real condition and situation of the body, energy, and the mind of the sick person. Sometimes an individual who has a serious illness which is difficult to cure may be in that condition due to karmic causes originating in youth or even in a past life. It may also happen that the illness is the result of a karmic cause which has manifested from recent actions. Thus, the method of examining dreams becomes one of the most important means for analyzing and discovering the principal and secondary causes of the problem.

What is meant by dreams related to the individual’s three existences? These dreams arise due to any kind of experience of the body, speech or mind. Thus, experiences directly related to the individual’s elements, energy, and emotions may become instantaneous causes for manifesting some dream experience, either good, bad, or neutral.

For example, a person who is sleeping on a bed in an awkward position may be uncomfortable or in pain. The disturbance may become the instant cause for a negative dream. Or, if a person is not sleeping well due to obstructed breathing, dreams of suffocating or of being strangled may arise. Further, it is not difficult to understand that feelings such as joy or sadness associated with the mind may also be the instant secondary cause for having dreams. These are examples of dreams related to conditions of the individual's three existences. With regard to dreams related to traces of karma, one type of dream encompasses those whose cause originates in a previous life. In this kind of dream, unfamiliar things may appear which the person has not experienced in this life, such as visions of another country or strange peoples who have unfamiliar customs or language. These dreams may repeat so often that the dreamer becomes knowledgeable of the unfamiliar world. Such experiences suggest the existence of a very strong habit from a past life which has left a karmic trace in the individual. Or a dream may appear of an unusual country with a strange person who wants to trouble or kill the dreamer; as a result the dreamer has a very strong feeling of fear. This sometimes means that a similar situation occurred in a previous life—the person's conditions were strongly affected and left a karmic trace. This trace reappears when the secondary conditions are ripe. This first type of karmic dream does occur, even though it is not experienced frequently by all people.

Karmic dreams of the second type are those whose causes developed in the dreamer's youth. If the youthful person was suddenly frightened or involved in an accident, that experience may leave a trace, and thus dreams may recur later in life that relate to the event either literally or thematically. Or if, for example, as a child someone experienced an earthquake which created great fear, then later in life there is the potential that the trace might become activated with the proper secondary causes such as the experience of another earthquake.

The third type of karmic dream includes dreams originating from recent actions that touched the person deeply. The person might have been extremely angry some time recently and, as a consequence, may have fought with someone. That intense anger leaves a trace; because of this a dream arises similar in situation or theme.

The causes of all these three types of dreams are principally karmic, that is, related to an event that touched the person deeply and left traces of the tension, fear or other strong emotion. When traces are left, it is logical that dreams with a corresponding theme arise more frequently.

There are similar varieties of dreams which are related to the clarity of an individual, that is, those related to the three existences and those related to the karmic traces of the individual.

Regarding the type of clarity dream related to the three existences, all human beings have in their real nature infinite potential and unmanifest qualities. Although the sun shines constantly, sometimes we cannot see it due to cloud covering, while at other times we can see between the clouds for a few moments. Similarly, sometimes the individual's clarity spontaneously appears; one result of this is the appearance of dreams of clarity.

People who are practicing Dharma try to relax. Through relaxing the body, energy, and mind, the elements and energies become balanced and through this secondary or instant cause different kinds of clarity dreams arise. This is particularly true for the practitioner who is doing practices related to the chakras[4] and the channels[5] which control the prana[6] and energy.

With some individuals, these types of clarity dreams arise through the clarity of their minds, even without the necessity of their applying secondary methods to relax the body or control the energy. When a practitioner has matured or developed, there is a diminution of the obstacles that usually function to obscure the natural clarity of mind. Following the analogy of the sun, the clouds have now largely disappeared and the infinite rays of sunshine are able to manifest

directly.

When all conditions are correct and the body, speech and mind are relaxed due to a developed practice, then there appear many kinds of clarity dreams, some of which may anticipate a future event. Also, like ordinary dreams that have karmic causes from past lives, clarity dreams of previous karma can reawaken. Depending on the dreamer's capacity, it might be possible to remember a past life in its entirety. One hundred or even a hundred thousand lives can be remembered in a dream. We can read about these extraordinary dreams appearing through unobstructed clarity in accounts of the lives of bodhisattvas and arhats.

An example of the dreams of clarity that a practitioner might have as a result of the karmic traces accumulated during youth would be as follows. Earlier in his or her life, a person may have met many extraordinary teachers, or received teachings and empowerments, or learned methods of practice. Later that person can have dreams about these things in which he or she goes deeper into this knowledge. The person may even acquire knowledge or methods for practice within dream that he or she has never heard before. One can have many interesting dreams of this type.

Clarity dreams related to recent experiences may arise as follows: A person reads something, perhaps a very important Dharma text, or has a deep conversation about practicing Dharma. This may become the cause for having dreams having to do with the past, the present, or even the future.

These are the types of clarity dreams. They are a continuation and development of the ordinary type of dream and arise primarily for practitioners who already have some experience working with their dreams or who have experience of maintaining lucidity and awareness within the dream. They are the type of dreams that manifests through the clarity of one's state of mind, or *rigpa*.[7]

Many of the methods of practicing Dharma that are learned during waking can, upon development of dream awareness, be applied in the dream condition. In fact, one may develop these practices more easily and speedily within the dream if one has the capacity to be lucid. There are even some books that say that if a person applies a practice within a dream, the practice is nine times more effective than when it is applied during the waking hours.

The dream condition is unreal. When we discover this for ourselves within the dream, the immense power of this realization can eliminate obstacles related to conditioned vision. For this reason, the practice of the dream is very important for liberating us from habits. We particularly need this powerful assistance, because the emotional attachments, conditioning, and ego enhancement which compose our normal life have been strengthened over our many, many years.

In a real sense, all the visions that we see in our lifetime are like a big dream. If we examine them well, the big dream of life and the smaller dreams of one night are not very different. If we truly see the essential nature of both, we will see that there really is no difference between them. If we can finally liberate ourselves from the chains of emotions, attachments, and ego by this realization, we have the possibility of ultimately becoming enlightened.

Notes To Chapter One

1. Shakyamuni is the historical Buddha who, born as Prince Siddhartha, renounced his royal birthright upon perceiving the suffering of the world, and attained final enlightenment. [return]

2. Dharmas: The truth, laws, and basic realities. This term is used in the singular to describe the path towards enlightenment. [return]

3. Karmic traces: According to the doctrine of karma, all actions are followed by inevitable, but not necessarily immediate, consequences. The term "karmic traces" refers to the "seeds" which exist as unmanifest potentials and which ripen when the necessary secondary conditions are present. [return]

4. Chakras: Non-material psychic centers located within the body at specific locations. According to Buddhist metaphysics, major chakras are found at the crown of the head, the throat, the heart, the navel, and the genitals. [return]

5. Channels: Non-material meridians through which the internal airs called *prana* flow through the body. [return]

6. Prana: Internal airs which, according to Norbu Rinpoche, flow within the body and may be directed so as to increase energy, circulation and concentration by advanced practitioners of Yantra Yoga. [return]

7. Rigpa: Awareness or pure presence of natural self-perfected mind. For additional commentary, see *The Cycle of Day and Night* by Namkhai Norbu. [return]

2 THE PRACTICE OF THE NIGHT

The night is very important for people because half our lives pass during it; but often we quietly sleep away all that time without any effort or commitment. There has to be real awareness that practice can occur at all times, even during sleep or eating, for example. If this does not happen, progress on the path is difficult to make. Therefore, the practice of the night is very important, and I will explain its theory and practice.

When someone says "practice of the night" we usually think of the practice of lucid dreaming. There are many explanations of lucid dreaming. But in the Dzogchen teaching, the practice of dream work, and development of lucidity, is not fundamental. It is a secondary practice. In the case of dream practice, *secondary* means that this practice can arise spontaneously or automatically from doing the principal practice, which is called the "practice of natural light."

This practice, the practice of the natural light, actually has to do with the state prior to dream. For example, a person falls asleep; *fall asleep* means that all of his senses vanish into him, and thus he is sleeping. From that point on there is a passage, a period of transition, until dreams begin. That period may be long or it may be short.

For some people, the state of dreams begins almost immediately after falling asleep. But what does it mean, that the state of dream begins? It means that the mind begins to function again.

In contrast, that which is called the state of natural light is not a moment or a state in which the mind is functioning. It is the period beginning when you fell asleep and ending when the

mind begins to function again. What exists after this? After this exists what we call the *milam bardo.*[1]

There is a correspondence between the states of sleep and dream and our experiences when we die. When a person dies, first of all the senses vanish. In speaking of *bardos,* we speak of the moment when the senses vanish into ourselves as the bardo of the moment of dying, *chokyi bardo.* At this moment the person has many sensations of the disappearing or withdrawal of the senses.

After that comes a state like unconsciousness; it is similar to a faint. There then begins what is called the arising of four lights. Various tantras[2] explain this with some slight differences. Some divide it into four lights; some refer to five lights. The truth is that it is as if you had fainted and—with the arising of lights—slowly, slowly consciousness is beginning to reawaken.

For example, the mind must begin working in order for reasoning to occur. First we must have an awareness of the senses. The mind begins to receive these perceptions, but there are no reasoning and thinking yet. Slowly, step-by-step, thinking actually arises.

There is the presence of the state of awareness, and yet mind has not begun to enter into operations such as thinking. This is the passage through which one moves in that state which is called the state of natural light. It has always been considered that it is during this period that the practitioner of Tantra realizes him- or herself. In Tantrism this period is also described as the moment in which one meets the mother light.[3] It is exactly this moment after the faint, in which awareness develops again, or reawakens.

In Tantric initiation, there are four sub-initiations, and the last of them is called the initiation of the word. If you have understood, at that time the master gives a kind of introduction to natural mind.[4] Even if you have not realized natural mind but you have a lot of participation, commitment, and faith, and you practice with devotion, it is sometimes possible that in the moment of the last awakening of consciousness there will come a flash of recognition of natural mind or rigpa. It is not easy, but if you have really had knowledge, it is possible. As you are passing or moving through, there is a series of the development of lights, for which there are many explanations.

In the Dzogchen teaching, the last of these phases, the fifth light, is spoken of as *lhundrub,*[5] the state of self-perfectedness. In that moment you have a reawakening of consciousness. It is possible for you to recognize that which has been transmitted to you through direct introduction by the teacher. The experience of that transmission is what we call the experience of wisdom.

Let us use the analogy of the sun. Imagine that the sky is covered with clouds, and among these clouds you catch a glimpse of the sun. Even if the clouds have not allowed full sunlight, you have had an experience of what is meant by sun and sunlight. This experience is analogous to that of wisdom.

This knowledge is spoken of as the "son" knowledge, in comparison to the "mother" knowledge or full experience. When we practice, we try to develop this son knowledge. This knowledge is the son of the mother.

Some people succeed in practicing and fully developing this knowledge, and thus realize themselves totally in this life. It is said that such a person can realize the Body of Light.[6]

But even if you have not realized yourself totally and yet have had experience of practice, then in the moment after death, in this state of lhundrub when you encounter the mother light, you will recognize the full presence of wisdom before you return into the workings of mind. The analogy that is used is that of a son uniting with his mother. The books speak of the meeting between the son light and the mother light, but what is really meant is that what we had only an

example of, we now encounter in its fullness.

This state—as we proceed through the lights to the ultimate light, the Ihundrub, or light of self-perfectedness—is the state in which any and every practitioner of Tantrism realizes himself or herself. It is only after that experience that the state of *sipa bardo* begins. Up to that point, we experience the *chonyid bardo,* the bardo of the *Dharmata.* Why do we call it the *Dharmata?* Because it represents our actual underlying state, or underlying consciousness.

Only after that begins the sipa bardo, the bardo as one normally knows it, the bardo of existence. In other words, it is where the workings of the mind begin again. It is as if we'd now gone into the state of dream. As in dream you can dream anything and then at a certain moment you wake up and another day begins, so it is considered that you come out of the bardo, and another existence begins. This existence is determined by its karmic vision, and that is how you transmigrate. This is how we continue day in, night out.

So we see that the state of the bardos is not something to be read about or understood abstractly. It is relevant to practice. The way to practice for death and the sipa bardo is to do this practice of the natural light. If you have become knowledgeable of, or have awareness of, the state of natural light, you will also have that awareness and presence in the moment of dying. If you are capable of dying with presence and awareness, it means you are knowledgeable about the manifestations of light. In this case you will have no difficulty recognizing the mother light.

To repeat: With the beginning of the bardo of existence, the functioning or working of the mind, what is called the mental body, also begins. This is equal to the arising of the state of dreams. In the practice we do, there has to be an awareness of, or mastery of, the state of natural light. When one has an awareness of the presence of this state of natural light, then even if afterwards the state of dreams arises, one spontaneously becomes lucidly aware that one is dreaming while dreaming, and automatically one achieves mastery of one's dreams. This means that the dream does not condition the person, but the person governs his or her dream. For this reason, the practice of dreams is secondary, and I cannot overemphasize how extremely important it is to do the practice of the natural light.

When we start to dream we may have one of two general types of dreams. One type is karmic dreams and the other is dreams of clarity. In addition to those dreams reflecting karma from our current life, karmic dreams can also be linked to our past lives. For instance, if someone murdered me in a past life, I may still in this life have dreams of being murdered. It is not true that what we dream is always about our experiences from this life. If an event is very weighty, then you may feel it life after life. When you sleep very deeply, you may create a perfect potential for past karma to manifest within your dreams.

If you merely have heavy tension, it may repeat in your dreams. For example, when you are a child and someone makes a problem for you it could repeat in your dreams. Or, if today I have a problem with someone, it may repeat tonight in my dream. The principle is that if you have heavy tension, and you sleep deeply, the tension tends to repeat. This is one kind of dream, a karmic dream of *bhakshas. Bhakshas* means traces of something left. For example, if there is an empty bottle which once contained perfume, you can still smell the trace of perfume. That is bhakshas.

The other type of dream is a dream of clarity. Why do we have dreams of clarity? Because everybody since the beginning has infinite potentiality; that is a qualification of the natural mind that we all possess. Sometimes, even if we are not doing a particular practice, a dream of clarity will manifest because we have that nature. If you are doing practice of the night and becoming more familiar with it, then not only occasionally, but on a regular basis, you will become familiar

with manifestations of dreams of clarity.

What is a dream of clarity? A dream of clarity manifests when there are secondary causes; through the secondary causes it manifests as clarity. We can even obtain advice and predictions for the future because there are secondary causes for future events. A dream of clarity generally manifests in the early morning. Why? It is because when we first fell asleep, we sleep very deeply. Slowly we consume this heaviness and our sleep becomes lighter. As it becomes lighter, clarity can manifest more easily. If your practice of continuous presence succeeds, then karmic dreams diminish. This is because they are linked with tensions. The state of contemplation or presence represents total relaxation. Consequently there will be no manifestation of tension. In the place of karmic dreams, you can have more dreams of clarity.

You may now understand what the theory is and what is its importance. Now I will explain how you practice it.

If you are an agitated person, then before you go to sleep, you can do a little deep breathing to regulate the flow of air and calm yourself. Then concentrate on a white Tibetan syllable "A" [Tibetan script would not scan; there is an image on the front cover, on the sleeping man's chest; when viewed upright, the character looks like a bird wearing a hat—Purusa, your scanner]

at the center of your body. If you prefer an English "A" it is acceptable. The important thing is that it correspond in your mind to the sound *Ahhh.* It is important that when you see that letter you automatically know what its sound is.

If you do not succeed in concentrating and seeing this at first, it may be that you do not know how to visualize. Try writing an "A" on a piece of paper, put it in front of you, and stare at it for a while. Close your eyes and this "A" will appear before your mind immediately. In this way you will get a more precise image.

So, you try to concentrate on this white "A". Or you fix on the presence of this white "A", and you stay with it as long as you can.

You can also do a kind of training to have greater precision in feeling this presence: Imagine that from the central "A" a second arises, and from the second, a third arises, until you can see a chain of "A"s going up to the crown of the head. Then you visualize these "A"s coming back down. You can repeat this a number of times if you do not fall asleep immediately. Whenever you have difficulty in feeling the presence of the "A", it is very useful and important to do this chain. This is a way of charging your clarity.

The most important point is that when you fall asleep, you try to have this "A" present. Initially, it should be accurate and sharp; afterwards you relax. Relaxing does not mean you drop the "A" or that you give it up. You retain a sense of its presence, and you relax, and thus you fall asleep.

For those who have not practiced this before, the first, second, or third time you attempt it you may not succeed at all. In fact, you may find you try it a little and then suddenly you are asleep. Like anything, until you have learned it, it is difficult, but if you exert your willpower, it becomes familiar to you.

If one is capable of falling asleep like this, one would find the full presence of the state of natural light. One falls asleep, and one is asleep with virtually full awareness. If one has this presence of mind when one enters into the state of dreams, it is easy to recognize that one is dreaming. It may not happen right away; some may arrive slowly at this result.

Even if this natural light does not occur directly, the first results will begin to show themselves in the state of dreams. You may find yourself dreaming strange dreams. What do I mean by strange dreams? As mentioned above, we normally have two types of dreams. The

karmic type comes from the traces of our difficulties, problems, memories, and preoccupations. Then there is the type of dream in which our natural clarity manifests. For example, towards morning, interesting dreams of things you have never thought about may occur, things that have no relationship to the traces of your thought and past but are more linked to your clarity. If you have practiced the natural light, dreams of natural clarity will manifest more frequently.

If you persevere in the practice of recognition of the state of natural light, it will progressively become easier to repeat the lucid recognition that you are dreaming. There will arise a steady awareness within the dream, and you will know that you are dreaming. When you look in a mirror you see a reflection. Regardless of whether it is beautiful or ugly you know that it is a reflection. This is similar to knowing that a dream is a dream, to being lucid. Whether the dream be tragic or ecstatic, you are aware that it is merely a dream.

Awareness within the dream state becomes a way to develop oneself and to break one's heavy conditioning. With this awareness, one can manipulate the dream material. For example, one can dream whatever one wishes or one can pick up a desired theme. One can continue from where one left off dreaming on a previous occasion.

Within the tantric system, the specific dream yoga practice is oriented towards preparing the practitioner for the bardo after the time of death. This is not the case in the Dzogchen system. In the Dzogchen system, it is not necessary that one commit oneself to working on dreams. That will arise naturally out of the practice of the natural light. The most important thing for this practice, as I have described, is to do the particular visualization of the white "A" before sleeping. In doing this visualization we use the working of the mind in order eventually to go beyond the mind.

What position you use while practicing this visualization is not ultimately important. Many people do this visualization practice after they are lying in bed. You must see what kind of person you are. One person may fall asleep merely by shutting his or her eyes, while another person might need to take a sleeping pill.

Let us take the example of the person who lies down and immediately fells asleep. If this person becomes distracted from his or her practice for a moment, he or she is already asleep. This is the type of person for whom a particular physical position might be useful. If the practitioner is a male it may be beneficial for him to lie on his right side. Assuming he does not have a cold which has blocked his breathing, it might also be useful for him to close the right nostril with his hand.

For women, the position is reversed. A woman should lie on her left side and try to block her left nostril. I am not saying to stop breathing, if you have a cold. This of course would not be a good thing. But what usually happens is that when you lie down on your side and the unclosed nostril is congested, within a few minutes that nostril will open.

The reason that the positions are reversed for men and women has to do with the solar and lunar channels.[7] The reason we take these positions is to make it easier to enter the state of contemplation, or presence of the natural light. If they make your sleep more difficult, then they are not recommended. That is why I said that these positions are primarily for a person who tends to fall asleep easily.

Let us consider for a moment the opposite situation, that of a person who has real problems falling asleep. In such a case it would not be advisable to do this kind of visualization practice or to take this position. It is likely that this type of person would merely become more nervous and perhaps not sleep at all. An alternative for people of this type would be to observe their thoughts. Whatever thoughts arise should be merely observed. Then, in this state of observing the thoughts

without becoming involved or conditioned by them, one sleeps. As long as one is not distracted, this is something that anyone can do without creating obstacles to falling asleep.

If you have difficulty sleeping at night, there are other practices you may employ to assist you. For example, having this difficulty often means that you need to coordinate the energy and function of the different elements within your body. If your energy is disordered, it prevents you from sleeping. In this case, a deep breathing practice done repeatedly can be beneficial. You might do the nine-fold purification breathing[8] before going to sleep. There are also physical exercises such as a series of eight movements[9] found in Yantra Yoga that can help develop your capacity for correct breathing and also balance your energies as an aid to sleeping. In addition, there are Tibetan medicines to assist a person who has difficulty sleeping. Unlike sleeping pills they do not cause dependence or other side effects.

These medicines, such as Agar 35 and Vimala,[10] can be used for one or two months—as long as you need, really—and will not cause any negative side effects. Rather, they will help your health and coordinate your energy. When you do not need the medicine anymore, you can stop without withdrawal symptoms or negative effects. That is the benefit of these Tibetan medicines.

If you have become habituated to Western sleeping pills, you can initially alternate them with Tibetan pills in order to lessen the dependency. One night you use Western medicine, and the next night you use Agar 35. After one or two weeks of alternating, you will be able to stop taking the Western medicine without a problem.

You must not think only of Tibetan medicine when it comes to assuring a good night's sleep. You should also work with breathing in the manner previously mentioned, as this is very related to sleep.

Sometimes you cannot sleep because one of your three humors[11] is disturbed. When the wind humor is disturbed one has particular trouble sleeping. Wind is linked with *prana* or energy. When prana is disturbed it is difficult to sleep. For more information on this you can consult books on Tibetan medicine. In a book I wrote[12] on the topic there is an explanation of the three humors and of how to overcome problems. For example, to overcome problems related to wind disease, it is helpful to go to bed earlier in the evening, to sleep with warm clothes, and to have something like soup to eat just before going to bed. If you are not sleeping at night, and instead of relaxing you work hard until late hours, or you eat raw vegetables, this may further aggravate the condition. There are many things to learn in Tibetan medical books.

Everything is related. First try these preparations so you can fall asleep. If you have succeeded, then you can do the practice of the night. If your situation is between falling asleep immediately, and not being able to fall asleep, then visualize a white "A" or "A", but one that is not very bright. If you have a problem falling asleep, you must not visualize the white "A" as too bright, and you could also visualize it in a sphere of five colors. This makes it easier to fall asleep. There are many kinds of people and many situations; we should know about all of them.

If one does this practice with commitment, one slowly may become a master of one's dreams. As one has more awareness and more dreams of clarity, dreaming becomes a practice. For example, as I mentioned, if one has achieved sufficient mastery of dreams, one can transform them. If I am dreaming something ugly, I could transform it into something beautiful, I could cause the dream to deal with some theme or argument that I have chosen, or I could play out some fantasy of my imagination. One could visit a paradise or contact a certain teacher. There are many things one can do; one can oftentimes work out the dream as one wishes. This can become a test of one's actual progress.

Let us discuss this in greater detail. As previously mentioned, there are preparations for

dreamwork as well as the actual practice. In regards to preparation, it would be advisable for one to conduct a retreat to first practice concentration on the six syllables[13] and their purification. After doing this practice for some time, many disordered dreams may appear. The arising of numerous disordered dreams is a sign that preparation is complete and then one can proceed to the practice.

In regards to practice there are three essential points. The first is to examine the dream; the second to control it; and the third to distinguish and recognize the *bag-chag* or karmic traces.

Prior to sleep each night it is advisable to relax the body, through baths and massage, for example. One must then resolve with full intention to progress on the path towards full awareness and lucidity within dreams.

Next, one may initially make use of the efficacious positions mentioned above that assist in the practice. One thus lays oneself down on one's side—the right side having to do with the void, the left with clarity—and closes the corresponding nostril with a finger of the corresponding hand, which lies under one's cheek. The right side actually governs or allows the void to operate, and the left side helps with the operation of clarity. It may be preferable, initially, to lie on the left side, thus promoting clarity—the work of the unimpeded right. Later as one's practice becomes stable, position will not be important.

If it seems that you have not dreamed, or there is only a faint memory of a dream, it is indicative that sleep was too deep. In this case, place the pillows higher, using lighter or fewer covers, let more air and/or light into the sleeping place or move to a more open spot. If dreams do not come regularly, you may experiment by sleeping in whichever way you find comfortable, on either the right or the left side. If dreams still do not come, concentrate on the throat chakra, and visualize a red A ("A"); if this is difficult, a red ball will suffice. If you still do not remember dreams, visualize the red letter or bead as increasingly more luminous each successive night. If difficulty persists, think of a white bead on your forehead, at the location of the third eye. If there is still nothing, visualize the white bead with increasing radiance each successive night. These concentrations are performed only if dreams are not remembered.

If you have not mastered the lucidity—awareness that one is dreaming while doing so—then during the day you should continually remind yourself that all that you see and all that is done is not other than a dream. By seeing everything throughout the day as if it were a dream, dream and awareness are thoroughly mixed. Subsequently, before sleeping, continue to focus well on the red "A" in the throat. Thus, you will fall asleep while fixing on the "A". Focusing in this way before falling asleep unites the *lung* or prana there with concentration.

On occasion, a fearful nightmare may arise. If due to shock you instantly become lucid, this is called "distinguishing the dream by violent means". Achieving lucidity in this manner is relatively common; subsequently you must continue to practice concentration on the red "A", and gradually there will also develop the capacity for lucid awareness within dreams with peaceful themes.

Continued progress in dreamwork, even after lucid awareness is commonly achieved, depends very much on the activities of the day. Intense concentration on a theme or on any subject will lead to its arising. If you wish to cause yourself to dream of a Tibetan deity, for example, think of transforming yourself into that deity by concentrating on the deity intensely. Similarly, imagining that you are traveling or making imaginary voyages to unknown or even known places will influence your dreams. Later, you can extend the voyages to paradise, for example, causing it to actually appear in the dream.

If you concentrate a great deal during the day, imagining that you are living a dream, then

during the night the dream itself will also seem less real. The subject, that which experiences the dream, is the mind. By holding the thought that all is a dream, you begin to dissolve this "subject". That is, the mind begins to dissolve itself, automatically.

Or, to put it another way, when the object or vision is dissolved, the action rums back towards the subject, causing complete dissolution. Thus, neither vision nor dream exists any longer.

One finds that the subject is not concrete and that vision is only "reflections". One thus becomes aware of the true nature of both. Vision created by karma and the psychic "tail" or background imprint is the origin of all illusions; if authentic awareness of the illusory reality arises, one arrives at the disappearance of "solid reality." Realization means true understanding of the waking state and the dream state.

Knowing the true nature of the dream, you may subsequently transform it. If you dream of a snake, for example, upon recognizing that you are dreaming, you should transform the snake into whatever you like, perhaps a man. Thus, it is not the dream which commands the dreamer, but the dreamer who commands the dream. When you have become able to change the dream, develop your skill by further scrambling the dream elements—for example, putting what is in the east in the west, multiplying or condensing the elements, turning things upside down, putting high things low, or making what is big, small. This process applies not only to forms, but also to sensations. If you dream of something pleasing, transform it into something unpleasant. Systematically reverse everything.

If you have difficulty transforming dream vision, it may be that in your dreams there arise too many images of the past, of childhood, for example, or even of other lives. In this case one could say that the dreams are influenced by the psychic "tail" or background. One finds considerable difficulty in transforming such a dream, whereas if one dreams of items or events linked to present or recent situations and happenings, transformation is much easier.

If one dreams of events which never happened—for example, of unknown countries and people—it may also be quite hard to put an end to dreaming or to exhaust the dream state. If all three phenomena arise, intermingled and confused (*bag-chag suma*) it is an indication that the process of transcending the dream state will be long and extremely difficult. If we have obstacles that hinder us from the final overcoming of dreams (*ja-lu-pho-wa-chen-mo*), we must make a deeper commitment and pray for progress.

Amid intentional transformation, spontaneous images may arise. For example, if you dream that you are in a forest, and choose to change the situation and place yourself in a desert, some items that appear may be different than what was intended to be projected. As one progresses and manages to maintain meditative awareness, experiences of clarity arise spontaneously.

As one continues towards mastery of the dream state, the principal technique next becomes the mixing of daytime vision and dreams. One must constantly carry one's awareness into the dreams. As soon as the dream arises, instantly be aware that it is "unreal" (*sha-dro*). One must also bring this same recognition of unreality to one's daily vision.

As we develop our awareness of the dream nature we may use dreams to deepen our meditative awareness. For example, a meditator who penetrates to the nature of "vision" (of phenomenal existence) finds it void. This perception of the emptiness of vision can then be transferred into the dream. If, while dreaming, you are not only aware of dreaming, but also conscious that all vision is an illusion, you penetrate to the Void at its heart. Thus a dream can be transformed into knowledge of emptiness, *shunyata.*

Although awareness of the true nature of the dream may enhance one's meditative awareness, there is also the danger that by becoming skilled at transformation of the dream images one may

become attached. The attachment must be overcome.

The principal means of cutting the attachment through the dream experiences are three. First, during the day, do not dwell upon the dreams you have had. Second, while actually dreaming, watch without judging, without pleasure or fear, regardless of whether the visions seem positive or negative and thus might provoke joy or unhappiness—that is, attachment. Third, while dreaming and then afterwards, do not "clarify" what is "subject" from what is "object"—that is, do not consider which of the images that appear are real. By proceeding in these ways, you will find that complex dreams gradually simplify, lighten and eventually may vanish completely. Thus, all that was conditioned will be liberated. At this point, dreams end.

You should try to do the practice of natural light each night, just as you should try to be in the state of contemplation continually. For every moment and every activity there are ways to do Dzogchen practice. If, however, Dzogchen practice of the night is difficult for you, and you have more experience doing tantric style dream practice and you have had an initiation on a particular deity, then perhaps it would be useful for you to continue with your tantric practice. For example, if you do the practice of Vajrayogini[14], then upon sleeping you should try to visualize a very tiny Vajrayogini at the center of your body. We call this tiny being *jnanasattva* which means wisdom manifestation.

You keep this presence and continue your sleep. There are other visualization practices similar to guru yoga[15] in tantric dream practices. For example, you might visualize Vajradhara[16] as the unification of all your gurus and manifest that visualization in the center of your body. You would keep the presence of this visualization, relax, and slowly, slowly go to sleep. Because these are tantric exercises, you should practice only the special instructions you receive from your master.

By contrast, in Dzogchen we generally do the visualization of a white "A", as mentioned above, for the purpose of coordinating the energy. We visualize the white "A" at the center of the body. After having manifested this white, luminous "A", we slowly relax. We relax slowly but completely when we do this visualization, so as not to have tension. If we do not relax completely, we will be unable to sleep. We must spontaneously manifest the white "A" without thinking, without creating, and then relax all effort and go to sleep.

In order to remind yourself to visualize the white "A" and to do the Dzogchen practice of the night, it is very useful to put a picture or sign of a white "A" near your bed. No one will know what it is; perhaps they will think it is a piece of artwork. You, however, will know its precise function.

It is also very important to remember the practice of the white "A" when you awaken in the morning. If possible you may sound "Ah" immediately. If you cannot sound loudly because there is someone else sleeping, it is enough that you exhale with "Ah," as long as you can hear yourself and feel the presence of that white "A". This is a method of guru yoga. It is not necessary to say many words or prayers; simply having the presence of the white "A" and recognizing that the "A" is the unification of the mind of all your gurus is sufficient. Then you integrate in a state of contemplation or rigpa.

Starting your morning yoga in this way is wonderful and will help very much with all your practices and particularly your practice of the night. There is a kind of connection you make by remembering the white "A" in the morning and again when you are going to sleep. If you maintain the presence of the white "A" in your sleep, you will have clearer dreams. Your dreams will become more associated with clarity, and slowly, slowly you develop greater awareness.

If you are aware in the dream, you can experience many things within the dream state. It is

easier to develop your practices in a dream than in the daytime. In the daytime we are limited by our material body, but in a dream our function of mind and our consciousness of the senses are unhindered. We can have more clarity. Thus there are more possibilities. For example, it is possible to practice advanced Dzogchen practices of *togel* and the Dzogchen *longde*[17]. If you practice these in the daytime you can certainly have meditative experiences, but in a dream you can have experiences beyond the limitation of the material body. That is why the practice is very important. In the daytime all experiences we have are very much conditioned by our attachment and tension. We feel that everything is concrete. In a dream we may initially feel that everything is concrete, but then suddenly remember that it is a dream. When you are aware in a dream, you know you are dreaming and that it is unreal. You know you are in a state of unreality. Once you have this experience, you can also make discoveries about your daily life such as about your major attachments. The ultimate result is to diminish your tension.

For those people who find it difficult to have the kind of presence I've described, the practice of the dark retreat[18] is very useful. After two days or three days in the dark, you lose your sense of day and night. Your sleep becomes lighter and lighter. You sleep and wake up, sleep and wake up. Such a retreat offers a good opportunity to develop your presence and clarity. In this environment you can more easily discover what it means to have presence when you are sleeping. Your waking and sleeping states thus become integrated.

Normally, for a practitioner, one of the principal ways that signs of progress manifest is in dreams. Sometimes there occurs, in dream, an intervention on behalf of the practitioner. For example, if I am doing something wrong, I may have a communication through a dream. This may come by way of transmission of the teaching. It may also come through the protectors of the teaching, or the dakinis.

Many problems can be resolved through the transmission that comes in dream. You can't expect that you are going to have the master at your beck and call in the flesh all your life. When I, for example, had been in Italy for about three years, I had a dream of my master Changchub Dorje.[19] In the dream I actually felt that I had returned to Tibet. It seemed so real, and I was in fact a bit frightened about the Chinese. I was worried, and I said to myself, "Who knows if the Chinese will let me out again." Then I met my teacher. I felt embarrassed, as my intention was to greet him quickly and then get out of there, and go back to Italy. My master said to me, "It has been many years that we haven't seen each other. How is your practice going?"

I said, "Well, like this and like that."

And he asked, "What practice have you been doing?"

I explained that I had been doing my best to take into daily life the practice of *trechod*[20].

"You haven't been doing any of the practice of *togel*[21]'?" he continued.

And I said, "Well, no, I haven't been doing the togel."

He asked, "Well, why not?"

"Well," I answered, "because you told me that I had to perfect the trechod first. I had to get it very stable. So I'm working to perfect and make very stable my trechod."

He said, "Well, do you have any doubts about your knowledge of togel?"

I said, "No, no, I don't have any doubts. I just haven't been doing that practice."

He said, "Well you better get to it. Do the practice of togel. That is very important."

I said, "Okay, that's what I'll be doing from now on."

He said, "Now listen, if you do have any doubts about togel, or anything you don't understand clearly, go ask Jigme Lingpa.[22]

I said, "Where is Jigme Lingpa?"

“Up the mountain there, in the cave,” he answered.

“Where up?” I said, because right behind the village where my master is, there is a sheer cliff. When I was living with my master, I went up that mountain many times to collect medicines. I knew perfectly well there is no cave up there. At least in those times there was no cave. I thought to myself, “Well, why is he telling me there’s a cave up there?”

The master became wrathful. He said, “If you really want to understand something, you’ll get up there and find Jigme Lingpa in that cave.”

So I didn’t argue anymore. I was very curious about it. I went out and started climbing up the mountain to see where the cave was. A certain part of the rock face is white, but in this dream I found it a little bit different from how it had been. It was all carved with innumerable letters which I could read in Tibetan. It seemed like a tantra. I thought, “This is very strange. It wasn’t like that before.” And I thought to myself, “Well, from walking, climbing, over this tantra, I’m going to accumulate some bad actions.” This is a Tibetan way of thinking about things. So with this preoccupation, I started reciting the one-hundred syllable mantra.[23] Then slowly, slowly I continued to climb up.

At a certain point there was a sort of curved rock that I had to climb on; this rock appeared to be a title page, with the title of the tantra which I’d just been climbing over. It was called the *Todral donsal ningpo gurd. Trodral* means beyond concept; *donsal* means to clarify the meaning; *ning-po* means the essence. Later I discovered that there actually is a tantra of that name.

So then I climbed up and slowly, slowly approached the very peak of the mountain and there was a cave. Coming close, I looked inside this rather large cave. At the very center, there was a stone—a white boulder, hard and like granite. It was not a tiny stone; it was a big boulder. Sitting on this rock was a little boy. I’m sure that he wasn’t more than seven or eight years old. I looked around. There was nobody else in there. I said to myself, “This is pretty strange. Jigme Lingpa lived a long time ago. He couldn’t be a little boy like that.” Meanwhile this little boy was looking at me. I thought to myself, “Well, since my master told me to come up here and meet Jigme Lingpa, who knows, maybe this is some kind of emanation of Jigme Lingpa.” I thought that I had better behave well towards him.

So I directly approached the child. He was wearing a garment that was like a transparent blue shirt. He had nothing else on. He had long hair, but not tied up like that of a yogi. He just looked like a normal little boy. I found this pretty strange. So I came up right in front of him. I said, “Master Changchub Dorje sent me to you.” The little boy looked at me. He looked almost as if he were surprised to hear this. Looking at the boy I began to doubt him, but I watched what he was doing. Finally he gestured me to sit down. When I sat down, he reached and touched the back of his head, and brought forth a roll of paper, a scroll. He opened the scroll and began to read from it. When he read, it was in the voice of a little boy, but he was not giving a teaching or an explanation. He was reading. He read four or five sentences. Immediately upon hearing his voice, I realized that the scroll was a tantra. At that moment it struck me, “Oh it’s true, it is Jigme Lingpa. Because it could hardly be some ordinary little boy who can produce a scroll and then read in this fashion.” And with this emotion, this startling thought, I awoke from the dream. Afterwards I did elaborate research to find those texts, and I found specific texts on the Dzogchen togel practice. This is an example of the fact that a relationship between master and disciple always exists regardless of questions of time and distance. My master was far, far away in Tibet; I was living in Europe.

These are some of the possibilities that can occur within dreams as one’s practice progresses.

If you fall asleep with the presence of the “A” you may find yourself waking in the morning with it still present. You can then assume that you have spent the entire night in practice. As the night is rather long, and you have nothing else to do but sleep, it is very important to utilize the time. Night can become, for a practitioner, even more important than the practice of the day.

The final goal of dream practice is that dreams become awareness and at that ultimate point dreams actually cease. You use your practice so that your dreams influence daily life. This is the principal practice of the nighttime.

Notes To Chapter Two

1. Bardo: literally, “intermediate state”. There are six bardos:

The **first** is the bardo of the ordinary waking state (Tibetan, *kye ne bardo*). It is the experience of the awake and conscious reality as we know it.

The **second** is the bardo of the dream state (Tibetan, *milam bardo*). It is the experience of dream time while sleeping.

The **third**, the meditation bardo (Tibetan, *samten bardo},* includes all experience of meditation, from novice meditation to total realization.

The **fourth**, the bardo of the dying process (Tibetan, *chilkai bardo*), is the process during which the five elements of which our body is constituted (space, air, water, fire, earth) dissolve into one another. According to the *Tibetan Book of the Dead,* first the element of earth, which is yellow in color, dissolves into the water element. The dying person simultaneously sees yellow and feels weak and unable to stand, as though all of his or her surroundings were falling apart. Secondly the element of water dissolves into the element fire. Inwardly the dying person sees white and outwardly feels as though his or her surroundings were flooded with water. At this point the face and throat feel dry and great thirst arises. Thirdly, the element of fire dissolves into the air element. Inwardly the dying person sees red while outwardly his or her surroundings feel hot. The person may feel a burning sensation as the body’s heat dissolves. Fourthly, the element of air dissolves into the element of space or ether. The dying person inwardly sees green and outwardly experiences the surroundings as though they were being destroyed by a ferocious wind and loud thunder. At the fifth stage, the ether dissolves into consciousness, phenomena become dark, and momentarily consciousness is lost, as in a faint.

The **fifth** bardo, (Tibetan, *chonyid bardo*), the bardo of reality, entails the arising of apparitions and hallucination-like experience as a consequence of one’s karmic propensities. Using meditative awareness the individual has an opportunity to recognize these images in their illusory, true nature. These hallucinatory visions are similar in nature to the images in dreams.

Hence the capacity for lucid dreaming may be useful for understanding them as illusion. According to the *Tibetan Book of the Dead,* an enlightenment experience is possible if one can maintain the view that the frightening experiences are nothing more than manifestations of one’s mind.

The **sixth** bardo, (Tibetan, *sipa bardo*), the bardo of the search for rebirth in samsara, corresponds to the Tibetan Buddhist view of reincarnation. The sipa bardo details the process whereby an individual will be reborn in one of six realms (the god realm, demi-god realm, human realm, animal realm, hungry-ghost realm, and the hell realm), depending on karma. In an interesting parallel to psychoanalytic theory, the Tibetan Buddhist tradition asserts that the individual, while still in a mental body, will be sexually attracted to the parent of the opposite

sex, and have an aversion to the parent of the same sex. In fact, according to Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, all that the disincarnate being sees are the sexual organs of the parents-to-be. This is perhaps the most basic foundation of what we call the Oedipus complex. [return]

2. Tantra: literally, “continuation”, in the sense that although all phenomena are void, nevertheless phenomena continue to manifest. All tantric methods work with the principle of transforming deluded thought to pure perception. See *Crystal and the Way of Light,* p. 30. The word *tantra* also refers to the texts within which these methods are described. [return]

3. Mother Light: In Dzogchen, one practices dream yoga or the practice of the Clear Light at the moment of falling asleep and before the arising of the dream state. The experience of Clear Light is known as the “son” experience. If, through correct meditative practice or contemplation, the Clear Light has been clearly recognized during life, then at death the practitioner once more recognizes and integrates with the “mother” Clear Light. This is known as the joining of the “son” and the “mother”. The mother Clear Light is the natural, innate luminosity as it appears in its fullest expression in the after-death state. See John Reynolds, *Self-Liberation Through Seeing with Naked Awareness* (Barrytown, N.Y.: Station Hill Press, 1989), p. 153, note 63. [return]

4. Introduction to natural mind: In the various methods of introducing one’s natural mind, the master is assisting the student in developing awareness, also called *rigpa* or the intrinsic awareness of one’s natural state, referring to pure presence. [return]

5. Lhundrup: literally, “self-perfection.” This refers to one’s state or existence which is perfect from the beginning, and all that manifests. These manifestations or reflections arise spontaneously, and are complete within themselves. *Lhundrup* specifically refers to the innate clarity of the self-perfected state. [return]

6. Body of Light: Tibetan, *ja-lus.* Also known as the “rainbow body.” Certain realized beings (practitioners of Longde and Managede levels of Dzogchen) achieve the transformation of their ordinary bodies into a Body of Light at the time of death. In this process the physical body dissolves into its natural state, which is that of Clear Light. As the elements of the body are purified, they transform from their gross manifestation (body, flesh, bone, etc.) into their pure essence as the five colors: blue, green, white, red, and golden yellow. As the body dissolves into these five colors a rainbow is formed and all that remains of the physical body are fingernails and hair. Twentieth-century practitioners of Dzogchen who have attained the Body of Light include the teachers and family members of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche—for example, his uncle Urgyen Danzin (Togden), his two teachers Changchub Dorje and Ayu Khandro, and Changchub Dorje’s master, Nyala Pema Dendul. [return]

7. Solar and lunar channels: Within the esoteric *tsa-lung* treatises found in Anu-Yoga texts of Tibetan Buddhism, there are elaborate explanations of the channels (Tibetan *tsa*) in which internal winds travel. The solar and lunar channels are considered to be located on either side of the central channel (*uma*), which parallels the spinal cord. These solar and lunar channels represent masculine and feminine energy. Their colors-red and white—as well as their placement on the right and left side differ amongst various Tantras. [return]

8. Nine-fold purification breathing: Tibetan, *lungro salwa:* A breath exercise performed before a session of meditation (*tun*), or before practicing Yantra Yoga. In these exercises one visualizes oneself inhaling purified air and exhaling negativities and impurities. It is used as a practice preliminary to meditation to balance the energy and settle the mind. [return]

9. The eight movements: Tibetan, *lung sang:* Yogic exercises to purify the *prana* or breath. The eight movements are described within the Yantra Yoga text, "The Unification of the Solar and Lunar" (Tibetan, *Trulkor Nyida Khajor*), written in the eighth century by the master Vairocana. See Namkhai Norbu, *Yantra Yoga*, edited by Oliver Leick (Gleisdorf: Edition Tsaparang, 1988), p.33. [return]

10. Agar 35 and Vimala: Tibetan herbal medicines. Agar 35 is made of thirty-five natural ingredients; both Agar 35 and Vimala are taken for insomnia and to balance "lung", a disordered wind condition. These preparations can be purchased through the Tibetan Medical and Astrological Institute, Khara Danda Road, Dharamsala, Dist. Kangra, H.P. 176215, India. [return]

11. Three humors: *lung* (air or wind), *dripa* (bile), and *bad-kan* (phlegm). The correct balance of these three humors is considered essential for health. An imbalance will lead to one of the myriad diseases to which humans are prone. [return]

12. Namkhai Norbu, *On Birth and Life: A Treatise on Tibetan Medicine* (Arcidosso: Shang-Shung Editzioni, 1983). [return]

13. Concentration on the six syllables and their purification: The six syllables—A, Aaah, Ha, Sha, Sa, Ma—are each symbolic of a realm of existence, including those of the gods, demigods, humans, animals, hungry ghosts, and hell beings. Karmic tendencies to be reborn in one of these samsaric realms, which originate through improper actions, must be purified. Meditation on the six syllables unites *lung* (prana) and mind concentration in order to purify these tendencies. The specific practice of concentration on the syllables employs visualization and mantra directed at specific points of the body where these propensities are believed to concentrate. [return]

14. Vajrayogini: A meditational deity in sambhogakaya form, representing the feminine aspect of primordial wisdom. [return]

15. Guru yoga: Unification with the mind of the guru (one's master teacher), who is seen as a manifestation of the minds of all enlightened beings. The mind of the guru is considered the same as one's intrinsic awareness. Through the practice of guru yoga one receives blessings from the guru, thus enabling one to rest in the primordial state. There are elaborate and simple forms of guru yoga. In Tantra, one finds a more elaborate style, whereas in Dzogchen a simpler version may be practiced.

One of the forms of guru yoga taught most frequently by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche employs a white "A", a Tibetan "A" The "A" is visualized in the center of one's body as the union of all one's masters. By sounding "Aaa.. .h" and feeling the blessings of the teachers, one may enter into a state of union with their enlightened awareness. [return]

16. Vajradhara: A male meditational deity, the form through which Shakyamuni Buddha reveals the teachings of secret mantra. [return]

17. Longde: One of the three series of Dzogchen teachings. The three series are: "Managede", or essential series, the "Longde", or the series of space, and the "Semde", the series of mind. These series of Dzogchen instruction ultimately have the same goal, that of bringing the practitioner into absolute contemplation. The Longde series works specifically with symbolic introduction and is widely known for practices that bring one to contemplation through assuming special positions of the body and holding pressure points. See Norbu, *The Crystal and the Way of Light*, p. 80. [return]

18. Dark Retreat, also called *Yangtik.* A highly advanced Dzogchen meditation technique practiced in complete darkness. Through the Yangtik practice, an initiate who is already capable of maintaining contemplation may proceed swiftly to total realization. [return]

19. Changchub Dorje: The principal master of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Changchub Dorje was a terton and master of Dzogchen. He was the master whom Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche credits as having truly introduced him to the state of Dzogchen. He also gave Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche transmission on Semde, Longde, and Managede. Though an extraordinary master, Changchub Dorje had a simple lifestyle, dressing in the garb of an ordinary country person. At Nyalagar, in Derge, Eastern Tibet, he directed a small community of Dzogchen practitioners. In addition to being a lama, he was an adept physician. People would come from distant places to receive both Dharma teachings and medical consultations. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche acted as a scribe and secretary for this master and assisted him in his medical consultations. At the end of his life Changchub Dorje attained the Rainbow Body of Light. See *The Crystal and the Way of Light*, p. 108. [return]

20. Trechod: Literally "cutting through", this term refers to the experience of total relaxation. Trechod is the method of maintaining one's state of rigpa throughout all situations. Trechod is the ability to cut through discursive and dualistic thought at any moment, bringing oneself to pure presence. [return]

21. Togel: "Surpassing the uppermost" or "leaping over." After perfectly succeeding with one's practice of *trechod*, one practices togel. Togel is useless without a perfected practice of trechod and is hence secret until that time. Togel is considered the fastest of methods for achieving total realization. Togel practice brings about the union of vision and emptiness. One continues to develop meditative contemplation through vision until the Body of Light is manifest. See *Crystal and the Way of Light*, p. 101 and John Reynolds, *Self-Liberation Through Seeing With Naked Awareness*, p. 136, note 33. [return]

22. Jigme Lingpa   (1729-1798): A reincarnation of Vimalamitra, Jigme Lingpa was a great Nyingmapa Dzogchen Master from East Tibet. He was a great scholar and compiled and edited the *Longchen Nyingthig*, the compiled teachings of Longchenpa. Jigme Lingpa also wrote extensively on Tibetan medicine and Tibetan history, and worked for the development of the non-sectarian "Rimed" school of Tibetan Buddhism before achieving the Body of Light. [return]

23. The one-hundred-syllable mantra of Vajrasattva: One purifies negative karma and obscurations through recitation of this mantra, one of the most renowned within Tibetan Buddhism. [return]

3 THE PILGRIMAGE TO MARATIKA

In 1984, Norbu Rinpoche traveled to northern Nepal on a pilgrimage to the monastery of Tolu, and to the cave of Maratika[1] where the great Mahasiddha[2] Padmasambhava[3] did a retreat with his consort Mandarava.[4] The following is an account of a series of remarkable dreams he had on this trip, beginning with a dream he had two days after reaching the monastery.

The location of the dream was Tolu Monastery itself. If you dream about a place or a thing where you have been in the past, this usually reflects a repetition through karmic trace; if you dream of a place or a situation where you are not, this reflects a desire or a wish. On the other hand, if you dream of the place you actually are, this is often significant. Thus I was clued that this might be an important dream.

In this dream I was at the cave of Tolu, and even the people who had actually accompanied me on the trip were there. As I was teaching my students, we were joined by my uncle. I should tell you that this man who joined us was not only my uncle, he was also one of my principal teachers, and an extraordinary practitioner and terton.[5]

I will tell you a short story which will illustrate the remarkable quality of my uncle's life. When I was a child I was living near a monastery. At the time I am recalling, a young horse had died. Vultures had eaten the horse, but even after they had finished, one of the vultures remained. My uncle asked two of the monks to go and fetch this vulture.

Upon their return to the monastery with the vulture, the monks announced that the bird had been wounded. There was a piece of iron lodged in its shoulder. One of the monks attempted to pull it out, but the vulture became quite agitated, and my uncle instructed him to stop and to put the vulture in an enclosed garden area. I remember thinking how strange it was that the vulture would remain so silent and passive while this was occurring. In fact the whole situation was becoming more and more unusual.

The next day my uncle instructed me to feed the vulture some milk. When I arrived at the garden, which was semicircular in shape, with a wooden floor and a covering over it, the vulture was sitting immobile. I placed the milk before it. Moving its head slightly it began to drink. It drank up all of the milk I had offered, and when it had finished began to run, and as it did so it moved its wings slightly. Insofar as the area was quite long it was able to run a long distance. It ran clear to the end of the garden, and then half way back; then it stopped and the metal piece, an iron rod, dropped from its wing. The very moment the iron piece fell out, the vulture flew away, heading due East in the direction of a large mountain called Sitang. The famous Dzogchen Monastery[6] is behind that mountain. It was also on that mountain that my uncle normally lived in a cave.

We examined the iron that had Men from the vulture's wing. It was quite long. The top that had been embedded in the wing was triangular. I can still remember the beautiful sound that the iron piece made when it fell from the wing. This event was merely one of the oddities that frequently occurred around my uncle.

So, on that occasion at Tolu, my uncle manifested within my dream. In the dream he was no

older than fourteen or fifteen years old. He said to me that he was very pleased that I was giving such a beautiful teaching, and that it was useful to everyone. I asked him if he had really been listening. He replied that he had heard every word. In the dream I had been teaching the Thik Sum Nedek,[7] the famous three final statements of Garab Dorje.[8] Then my uncle asked me to explain my *gomter*[9] about the Namkha.[10] I replied to him that my dream about the Namkha hadn't been a gomter.

Allow me to explain what I was referring to. A few years ago, I was in New York City. I was giving a seminar there about the function of elements and energy, as well as about Tibetan history. At this seminar I gave an explanation of the elements and their functioning according to the ancient Bonpo[11] tradition. That night I had a dream. In it there was a small boy dressed in blue. I asked him who he was, and he replied that his name was Fuel. Fuel was a famous Bonpo deity, particularly known for his capacity to accomplish divination through astrology.

I said, "If you are really Fuel, then explain to me about the function of the elements of individuals, and how one might harmonize them when there are problems." This small child then proceeded to explain the different kinds of functions of the elements, relating to body, life, fortune, capacity, etc. Through this I discovered the precise principle of Namkha, the method of harmonizing the elements of a person.

I had said to my uncle that this dream of Fuel wasn't a gomter, it was merely a dream, but he insisted that because it was a gomter he would like a transmission. Insofar as he is my teacher, I didn't really feel comfortable with his request, but he insisted and so eventually I did read him the book, and thus gave the transmission. After that was complete he said that Namkha will be an important practice in the future. He also said that I must practice and teach on the "five darkness practice". I asked what was this five darkness practice. He responded that there would be some indications later. That was one of my dreams.

During the days we spent at Tolu Monastery I had extremely important dreams constantly, and by the time we approached the astrologically significant twenty-fifth day,[12] I was a bit nervous about sleeping. With a concern as to what would happen now, I went to bed, but for quite awhile I couldn't sleep. Finally, when I did sleep, I found myself in a kind of dream, in which I was speaking with someone. I actually don't know if I was speaking with someone else, or carrying on a conversation with myself.

The voice instructed me to relax, first the breathing, and then the body, until I found myself in the relaxed state of Samaya.[13] I thought to myself that I had never heard of this relaxed state of Samaya. Nevertheless, I tried again and again to relax, and to put myself into that state. Each time, largely due to my discomfort with the sleeping conditions at Tolu, I would wake up. Indeed, I awoke at least two or three times in the course of trying to get into the state of relaxation. On one of these occasions I received instructions within the dream to loosen the mountaineering leggings that, due to exhaustion, I had failed to remove before falling asleep.

When I awoke remembering the instructions, I untied them, and fell asleep once again, slowly relaxing into the state of Samaya. "It's not perfect yet," the voice said, "we have to have fresher, easier breathing." In order to comply I opened the tent to let in some fresh air, even though it was very cold and a fierce wind was blowing. Once again I returned to sleep and entered Samaya. I was again thinking that this Samaya wasn't that terrific, not really a state of contemplation.[14]

The voice returned, and said "Now that you've done that, you have to get to the state of Dharmadhatu.[15] As instructed, I relaxed, and directed myself towards this state of Dharmadhatu. Meanwhile, I was awakened by a cough from a nearby tent.

I went back to sleep yet another time, and directed myself to go through the successive levels

of relaxation. Again and again I awoke for one reason or another, and had to start from the beginning. Then suddenly the voice was saying, “We’re here, this is the state of Dharmadhatu,” which seemed to me to be the state of contemplation.

The voice now instructed me to direct myself to another state.

As I did this, there began to appear a kind of tigle[16] similar to one which had appeared in a previous dream at Tolu cave. I also saw some writing, and then I woke up once again...

I had to start at the beginning, relaxing through the different stages until the tigle reappeared. What I had seen in the tigle was the title of a text. This time after the title there appeared a text itself, just as if I were looking at a movie screen. One after another, an entire series of meditation practices appeared. I was reading page after page, but if at any point I couldn’t read one, I would only need to think to myself that this wasn’t clear, and the unclear portion would return. It would repeat itself as if I had some sort of telecommand. In this manner I read the whole text from beginning to end at least three or four times.

Due to interruptions I awoke frequently. But each time I would go back to sleep, and begin with Samaya and all the rest, and then the text would go on.

Suddenly the voice said, “You are now in the next state.” What distinguished this state from the previous one was that now the few words which had not been completely clear appeared to occupy all of space. Without any focusing or staring on my part, they just appeared. Thus I went on reading, and it continued without interruption until almost morning.

At this point I coughed intensely and awoke. The words were still there even with my eyes open. It wasn’t a dream. I saw them for a short time, and then they disappeared. I thought that perhaps this was just the influence of the dream. Curious, I continued to look into the sky. The sky was very clear, and there was no more vision.

I remembered one time when I was doing a retreat in Norway. I was in the middle of a practice when the same thing happened. I told some people about my experience at that time. Previously I had read about *Snang-ba-yi-ger-shar*[17] in the biographies of some accomplished teachers. In Norway I recall having thought that I had not previously understood what the phrase “Snang-ba-yi-ger-shar” meant. Anyway, I fell asleep once again, and relaxed through the successive stages. In the dream, while being instructed to enter the various states of relaxation I suddenly had a thought about an even further state—something entitled “Bya-grub-yeshe,” the furthest state of wisdom. The voice answered my thought saying, “It will come when all is completed.” Then morning came. I was truly exhausted. Everyone else was still pleasantly asleep. That is the story of the twenty-fifth day.

The next day we had a long climb. That evening, when I fell asleep, it all happened again. Again I read the text through several times, and particularly the areas where the letters hadn’t been sharp. At a certain point I suddenly woke up. I found my head covered with a blanket. There had been so much wind that I must have been protecting myself. Uncovering my head, I opened my eyes, and immediately looked into the sky. There, very briefly, were the letters again.

I’d like to tell you now about a dream I had on the first night that we arrived at Maratika cave. Before going to bed I thought to myself that tomorrow would be a good day to begin a long life meditation practice that I had brought along. I still hadn’t entirely developed a particular method for doing this practice, but I had carried the practice text along with me because I had had the idea that Maratika would be a nice place to practice it.

That night I dreamed that I was preparing to do the practice in a big cave. I was explaining how the practice would be done, and was giving an initiation which would enable the students to do the practice themselves. Normally, in our tradition, in order to do a long life practice, one

needs a long life initiation.

Those of you who know me know that I am not the type who typically does elaborate formal initiations,[18] but I have always said that it is necessary to do some kind of initiation for empowering. In my dream I had the idea that I would first give a careful explanation of the meaning of the initiation. When the people had understood it well, I would give empowerment with the mantra. After that, we would do the practice together; that would constitute the voice transmission.

So, in my dream I was explaining each point of what the initiation was, starting with the initiation of the body. At that moment I noticed that there was a person near to me giving me something. I turned to him, and saw that he was not a normal human being. Of this I was certain, because the first thing I observed while looking at him was that the lower part of his body was that of a serpent. I thought that perhaps this was Rahula,[19] one of the guardians, but when I looked at his face this seemed unlikely. I then thought that perhaps it was, or represented, someone that I knew. I looked again—his face was dragon-like in appearance. His body was white. Suddenly he placed something into my hand.

If you have taken an initiation, you know that there is usually someone assisting the teacher by giving him things. At the appropriate point in the ceremony, the assistant offers the correct object. In my dream the dragon-like being was giving me a round object with which I was about to authenticate the initiation of the body that I had just given.

I took the round object into my hand. It was a mirror, but on the rim surrounding the mirror were what seemed to be twelve smaller mirrors. Around them all was a kind of rainbow. And around this perimeter were peacock feathers. It was very beautiful. As I took it into my hand I knew that this was the object with which I could give the initiation of the body.

Normally in an initiation, the mirror represents the mind, the aspect of understanding. Immediately in the dream an explanation came to me: “The body seems to be substantial, but inherently it is void. The symbol of this is the reflection that appears to be our form in the mirror.” Conveying this explanation, I used the mirror in my dream to give the initiation of the body. In my dream I touched the mirror to the heads of each of the people receiving initiation. As each went past I also said a mantra.[20]

I next began to explain the initiation of the voice. At this very moment I sensed the presence of another being on my left. This being also offered an object for authentication. The object was a mala[21] made of deeply colored red rubies shaped into a figure eight. I looked carefully at the being who was offering the mala. It had a dark red body, and only one eye. I thought again that this was no ordinary human being, perhaps it was Ekajati.[22] On the other hand it didn’t seem quite like Ekajati, and in her hands were these strange objects. In any case, just after she gave me the mala, I found that I was again giving an explanation.

“This mala represents the continual utterance of the mantra.” Not only did I explain the function of mantra, but I also gave a very unusual explanation about this form of mantra which is presented in the form of a figure eight. It was all quite strange because the explanation had nothing to do with the particular long life practice *(Cedrub Gondus)* of Nyala Pema Dendul[23] with which I had arrived.

The next day, after dreaming about another long life practice featuring the dakini Mandarava, I discovered that there is really a Yantik practice, which in fact includes this visualization. Meanwhile the Ekajati figure had placed another object in my hand, this one a symbol for empowering the initiation of mind. The object resembled a swastika, but at the top there were tridents. It was the center which was the swastika. It was constructed of a transparent, precious

blue stone.

I then explained the meaning of the transmission of mind. Afterwards, I put this object at the heart of each person in turn. At the same time I was pronouncing the mantra related to initiation of mind. After I placed the object at the first person's heart, I saw that it left an impression, and that the impression of the object was turning, with a small sound. It seemed very alive. When I initiated the next person, the same thing happened. When I was finally finished I saw that all the swastika impressions were still turning. That was how I conducted the initiation, and then I awoke. The next day I decided to do a retreat inside the cave. Many of the students who accompanied me on this pilgrimage joined me to do the practice of Pema Dendul in the cave of Mandarava.

The next day I had yet another special dream. Although many of our people had not actually arrived yet, I dreamed that we were all together in the cavern. We had already done a practice together, and I was giving teachings. In the dream it seemed as if the dream of the previous night had been recreated exactly. At my left there was the figure that was reddish-brown with one eye. Once again she was holding many objects in her hand; this time she gave me a bead of crystal.

It was now clear that this being was assisting me as I gave instruction. I took the crystal into my hand, and looked at it. At the center of the crystal I saw a word. As soon as I saw that special word, I knew that this being was indeed Ekajati. I also had a very clear dream vision of the guardian Ekajati who advised me, saying: "This is the time to open your mind treasure of life's circle of Vajra, the dakini practice for obtaining long life."

Looking inside the small crystal ball, I could see light rays radiating in all directions from the word, but they did not radiate outside the ball. As I took the ball, I asked, "What is this thing?" She said, "This is 'Ta-te.' You have to do Ta-te'." "I don't understand," I replied. The moment I said that, it seemed as if the crystal disappeared inside me. I looked around to see Ekajati, but she too had disappeared.

Upon awakening, my first thought was "Ta-te," and what it could mean. It was still far from dawn, I had a lot of time, so I continued to concentrate on the word "Ta-te". This is not a familiar word. "Ta" means pure, "te" means to confront, or sometimes it means to list. In my half-awake state I was thinking of this word, when it came to me that what was required was that I write down the text, and later write it again without referring to the first version in order to test its authenticity. It was now perfectly clear what must be done.

After washing myself, I took a paper and pen, and went out onto a rock. Then, without a plan, I wrote whatever came to my mind. I wrote several pages, and what emerged was a ceremony of Ekajati. This was the beginning. Afterwards I went to have breakfast. During breakfast I asked one of my students to fetch me a notebook. When I had finished breakfast she still had not returned, so I took another notebook to a specific place where I had been on the first day, a power location of Maratika, and sat down.

I had almost begun when the student arrived with a black notebook and a red pen. With these I started writing. It was as if I was starting off a letter. I headed it Maratika, along with the hour and the day. It was 9:15 in the morning. While I was writing, various people from my group came over. Some of them didn't know what I was doing. As they came over to greet me I tried to get rid of them.

Despite interruptions, I finished writing at 12:15. When I had finished I had used up the last page, right up to the last line of the notebook. It almost seemed as if it had been deliberately planned. I reflected to myself that this was a good sign.

Returning to our campsite, I gave the text to two students to hold for several days. I was

thinking that after a few days I would write it out again. That would be the “Ta-te,” the second version to be compared with the first in order to confirm its authenticity. This would be proof that the text was genuine, and not merely my intellect at play.

Two days passed. On the third day, I had a dream indicating that the time had come to write and make some clarifications. After completing morning practice I again sat down to write, and continued until lunchtime. The second time I wrote it out very calmly in an easy script. This time it took me two and one-half hours. I then asked that the original be returned, and that my older sister compare the two versions. There was virtually no difference, only two or three grammatical corrections.

This is the story of the origin of that practice text, a practice for developing a long and firm life. The text includes mantras, exercises for breathing and control of one’s energy, as well as visualization. There are also instructions pertaining to chakras and channels. In the Tibetan tradition this type of practice is often sealed, meaning that it has to be kept secret for many, many years. When you are keeping such a thing secret you are not permitted even to say that you are keeping something secret. In this case it has not been necessary. There has been no indication that this should be sealed. I have no secret to keep; therefore, I have talked about it. I also talked about it at Maratika, and have done transmission of the mantras.

Notes To Chapter Three

1. Mandarava’s Cave at Maratika: In Northern Nepal, where Norbu Rinpoche did a retreat in 1984, there are two sacred caves. The larger one is associated with Padmasambhava, and the smaller one with Mandarava. In the seventh century, Mandarava—together with Guru Padmasambhava—practiced and attained immortality in this cave, which has consequently become known as the Cave of Long Life. [return]

2. Mahasiddha: Sanskrit, literally “Great Adept”. *Maha* means great, while *siddha* is one who has attained siddhi— psychic and spiritual powers. In Tibetan Buddhism there is the example of the Eighty-four Mahasiddhas who were men and women with supernatural powers. These tantric practitioners lived in India and Nepal during the eighth century. [return]

3. Guru Padmasambhava: Sanskrit, from *padma* (lotus) and *sambhava* (born). An Indian Buddhist master of Tantra and Dzogchen from Oddiyana. He is known as the “lotus born” because of his miraculous birth. Guru Padmasambhava is said to have spontaneously manifested as an eight-year-old boy sitting on a lotus flower in the middle of a lake at Oddiyana. He brought Buddhism to Tibet from India in the eighth century. With his extraordinary powers, Guru Padmasambhava overcame obstacles that had prevented Buddhism from taking root in Tibetan soil. [return]

4. Mandarava: This Indian princess from Mandi was one of the principal consorts of Padmasambhava. She left the royal life in order to practice the Dharma. She is most renowned for mastering the long life practice with Padmasambhava. She is invoked in certain Tantric rituals which aim to extend life. [return]

5. Terton: One who discovers *terma*, or Dharma texts that were hidden with the purpose of being discovered at a later date. Termas are believed to be hidden in trees, lakes, the earth, and even the sky. [return]

6. Dzogchen Monastery: In the seventeenth century, in Kham (East Tibet) the Dzogchen Monastery was founded by the first Dzogchen Rinpoche, Pema Rigzin. This became the largest Nyingma monastery. The monastery was considered one of the twenty-five great pilgrimage places in East Tibet. Close by the monastery is a sacred cave of Padmasambhava and three sacred lakes. Many famous scholars of all four schools of Tibetan Buddhism and from the Bon tradition studied at Dzogchen Monastery. These include Patrul Rinpoche and Mipham. In 1959 Dzogchen Monastery was destroyed by the Chinese. The monastery is currently being rebuilt in Mysore, South India. [return]

7. Thik Sum Nedek: The Three Statements of Garab Dorje. This text summarizes Dzogchen teachings in three essential points: (1) *The direct introduction* of the primordial state from teacher to student. (2) The practitioner *does not remain in doubt* in reference to what the primordial state is. (3) The practitioner *continues in the state* of primordial awareness until total realization. [return]

8. Garab Dorje: According to traditional Nyingmapa sources, Garab Dorje lived 166 years after the *parinirvana* of the Buddha, dated in Tibetan sources as 881 B.C. Western scholars say it occurred 200 years later. It is said that Garab Dorje was immaculately conceived by the nun-princess daughter of a minor king of Oddiyana. This nun had been practicing on an island in the middle of a lake when she had a dream. She dreamt of a handsome, white man holding a crystal vase with mantras engraved on it. This man bestowed initiation on the nun, and then dissolving into light he entered her body and impregnated her. Sometime after this dream she gave birth to Garab Dorje. According to Nyingmapa sources, Garab Dorje was the first human Dzogchen master. In his previous life in another dimension, Garab Dorje had received Dzogchen transmission directly from the sambhogakaya manifestation of Vajrasattva. After being born in the human realm, Garab Dorje immediately remembered these Dzogchen teachings and instructed a class of beings known as dakinis in the sacred land of Oddiyana. He also had human disciples, one of whom was Manjushrimita, who organized his Garab Dorje teachings on Semde, Longde, and Managede. For further information on Garab Dorje see John Reynold's *The Golden Letters*, Station Hill Press, forthcoming. [return]

9. Gomter: "mind terma", a terma discovered in the mind stream of a terton (one who discovers terma). [return]

10. Namkha: A method of practice to balance one's bodily elements. A namkha is made in accordance with one's astrological birth chart. It is formed by two pieces of wood and five colors of string, each representing a different element: white, metal; green, wood/air; red, fire; yellow, earth; and blue, water. The colored string is wrapped around the wood in a pattern that functions to harmonize one's elements. The namkhas are empowered by a master, and the practitioner is given meditation instruction on a ceremony, which, if practiced together with the namkha, can balance one's elements. [return]

11. Bonpo: A practitioner of the Bon religion. Bon is the ancient and indigenous religion of Tibet, whose origins far predate the advent of Buddhism in Tibet. According to Lopon Tenzin Namdak, the Bon religion in Tibet dates as far back as 18,000 B.C.E. Bon is divided into two categories: Old Bon and New or "Yung-drung" Bon. Old Bon was characterized by animistic and shamanistic practices, whereas Yung-drung Bon shares many similarities with Buddhism, which came to Tibet in the eighth century A.D. from India. According to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Dzogchen is part of the ancient tradition of Bon, and was practiced in Tibet long before the arrival of Buddhism. [return]

12. Twenty-fifth day: The twenty-fifth day of the lunar month (Tibetan calendar), when the moon is waning, is known as Dakini Day. Dakini Day is associated with enlightened feminine energy. Therefore, many Tibetan lamas do practices associated with feminine energy at this time. Dakini Day is an auspicious time to do Ghana Puja (Tantric Feast Offering). [return]

13. Samaya: Although the term *samaya* is often translated as "commitment", and frequently pertains to the commitment to maintain a meditation practice or vow in a pure way, the dreams' meaning of this term is idiosyncratic. In Norbu Rinpoche's dream, the terms *Samaya* and *Dharmadhatu* refer to successively deepening levels of relaxation. [return]

14. Contemplation: The primary practice of Dzogchen in which one remains continually in a state of self-liberation. In this state one is beyond all concepts of the ordinary dualistic mind, yet one is fully capable of using the intellect and rational mind. Contemplation does not involve trying to find experiences of calmness or clarity, nor does it involve avoiding distractions. In contemplation, when a thought arises it is neither suppressed nor followed, but is spontaneously self-liberated and dissolves. It is this practice of liberating all that arises which a Dzogchen master introduces when he gives explanations on the nature of mind. [return]

15. Dharmadhatu: This term normally refers to the ultimate ground of being, and the dimension of reality as it is. However, in this dream it refers specifically to the deepest level of relaxation. [return]

16. Tigle: There are different definitions of tigle. On one level it is defined as something without any corners or angles, a circle or perfect sphere, like the Sanskrit *bindu* (drop), for example. Tigle is also defined as the dimension inside a sphere. *Tigle Chenbo* (Great Sphere), meaning "that which embraces everything", is another term for Dzogchen. Tigle is also known as "the essence," as in *nying thik*, "essence of mind." In another definition, tigle is semen in men, and vaginal fluid in women, which are physical vehicles for carrying energy. In terms of Yantra Yoga, tigle is defined as the most essential form of the body's subtle energy, also known as Kundalini in Sanskrit. Tigles are also tiny spheres of rainbow light that may arise with the beginnings of vision in togel practice. [return]

17. Snang-ba-gi-ger-shar: The spontaneous arising of letters. [return]

18. Initiation: Initiation, transmission, and empowerment of body, speech, and mind. Human existence is made up of body, speech and mind. First, there is the dimension of "body," which is the dynamic interrelationship between one's body and the physical environment. There are two

different Tibetan terms for "body." *Lu* refers to the gross body of an ordinary human being, whereas *ku* refers to the sublime body of an enlightened being. Secondly, there is the dimension of our energy known as "speech", which is represented by speech, breath, and psychic energy. Ordinary speech is known as *ngag*, whereas enlightened speech is *sung.* In the dimension of mind or mental activity there is *yid*, ordinary mind, and *thuk*, enlightened mind. Through transmission (*gyudpd)* from the master to the disciple, there occurs a potentiation which is communicated on the three levels: material, energetic, and mental. Dzogchen transmission by the master is for the purpose of revealing the true nature of the individual. Empowerment or *wang* is a ritual ceremony in which this transmission takes place. Empowerment, especially within Tantric Buddhism, may be extremely elaborate, utilizing symbolic instruments and ceremonies. In Dzogchen, the method of direct introduction, which may be elaborate or non-elaborate, is used to introduce one to the nature of one's mind. For information on direct introduction see John Reynolds, *The Golden Letters*, Station Hill Press, forthcoming. [return]

19. Rahula: A principal guardian of the Dzogchen teachings. Rahula manifests in a terrifying and ferocious form. He has extreme power and, according to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, if not respected can cause considerable harm. [return]

20. Mantra: Literally, "mind protector." Mantra is the sounding of sacred syllables. Different mantras have different functions: some are used to stir up and activate one's energy while others create a calming and pacifying effect. Ultimately the goal of mantra is to help the practitioner to transcend dualistic thought. Many mantras are associated with particular deities, and within Tantric ceremony they are repeated until one has attained the same enlightened qualities as the deity. [return]

21. Mala: In the Buddhist tradition a mala or rosary is a string of 108 beads used for counting mantra. [return]

22. Ekajati: Ekajati is the principal guardian of the Dzogchen teachings. Enlightened from the very beginning, Ekajati is a direct emanation (*trulpa)* of primordial wisdom, Samantabhadri, who is the feminine aspect of the primordial Buddha Samantabhadra. As the primordially enlightened one, Samantabhadri Ekajati has all-knowing wisdom regarding the 84 million teachings of Dzogchen. Ekajati visibly manifests in a particularly wrathful form in order to subjugate the very powerful and potentially destructive class of beings called Mamos. "Ekajati" means "one-eye", which is symbolic of wisdom. What is unique about her physical form is that it is one-eyed, one-toothed, and one-breasted. These features symbolize non-dual awareness. As chief protectress of the Dzogchen teachings, she may make contact with a terton or Dzogchen master when the time is ripe to reveal a certain teaching or terma. Norbu Rinpoche received a sadhana from Ekajati as part of this gomter of the Mandarava practice. The sadhana is an invocation, within which the practitioner asks that Mandarava clear all obstacles to total realization and provide protection on the path. [return]

23. *Cedrub Gondus:* "The Union of Primordial Essences", the long life practice Norbu Rinpoche brought to Maratika. This long life practice was a terma of the root master of Chang-chub Dorje, Nyala Pema Dendul (1816-1872). The practice was originally transmitted directly from Buddha Amitayus to Guru Padmasambhava. Together as consorts, in the sacred cave of Maratika in

North Nepal, Dakini Mandarava and Guru Padmasambhava practiced and mastered the Union of Primordial Essences, thus attaining immortality. In the eighth century, for the benefit of future generations, Guru Padmasambhava wrote out the practice and placed it as a hidden treasure within a rock in East Tibet. Approximately one thousand years later, in the nineteenth century, Nyala Pema Dendul rediscovered this "hidden treasure" or terma. For several years he practiced this long life terma intensively. At his life's end he attained the rainbow body of light. Nyala Pema Dendul transmitted the practice to Changchub Dorje and Ayu Khandro, who both practiced it and subsequently lived unusually long lives—137 years and 116 years respectively. They also attained the body of light. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche received transmission of this terma from both Changchub Dorje and Ayu Khandro, and presently gives transmission on the practice for the benefit of his students. [return]

4 AN INTERVIEW WITH NORBU RINPOCHE

Michael: I would like to ask you a few questions about dreams. First of all, what is the history of the dream practice that you do?

Norbu: What do you mean "history"?

M: When and by whom was the first dream practice taught? Who was famous for teaching it?

N: It is not easy to answer this, because dream teachings come from different kinds of tantra teachings, particularly the Mahamaya Tantra, but also from Dzogchen teachings.

M: When was the Mahamaya Tantra written?

N: Beyond time; you cannot say when it was written.

M: Was there any particular author?

N: (laughing) There is no author of tantric teachings. Maybe a mahasiddha transmitted this teaching and introduced it from Odiyanna[1] in India. After all, Saraha introduced the Guyasamaja Tantra, and Tilopa introduced the Chakrasambhava Tantra. It is possible that something like that can be said to be the history of the transmission of a tantra, but there is no original history of the tantras.

M: Rinpoche, sometimes you have taught dream practices where one visualizes a white syllable "A"[2] at the heart, but at other times you have taught that one should visualize an "A" at the throat. What are the different conditions in which one should visualize the "A" at one's heart or throat?

N: The visualization of "A" at throat is particularly for remembering dreams. The visualization of "A" at the throat has the function of controlling energy and clarity. When you visualize a white "A" at the heart, you are working with the principle of natural light; that is another method.

M: Why do we dream?

N: Well, sometimes dreaming is due to bhakshas, the impressions of the day. These include our anxieties, attitudes, and preoccupations. There is also another type of dream which arises from our clarity. This type of dream is dependent on the dreamer's circumstances and clarity.

M: How do we distinguish between dreams that arise from our clarity and dreams that arise from our daily impressions and bhakshas?

N: If we have had an exhausting day, and all we can do is eat and fell into a heavy sleep, it is not likely that we will have a dream of clarity. More often, in such circumstances we have dreams about something with which we are preoccupied. It may even be somewhat difficult to remember this dream due to the heaviness of sleep. On the other hand, as we approach the early morning and are almost at the point of awakening, our dreams may become quite clear. It is more likely that they will be associated with our clarity during this period. If a dream is associated with clarity, it may have special meaning for our lives. It may indicate many things.

M: Is this true also for someone who practices dream yoga?

N: If you are a practitioner of dream yoga, dreams arising out of clarity will develop and increase. Nevertheless, dreams linked with clarity do exist for everyone. Everyone has innate clarity.

M: When do babies begin dreaming? Does their dream content reflect previous lives as well as bhakshas?

N: Yes, we say babies do have more dreams that arise from the impressions of a previous life. Small children can more easily remember events from a previous life; their clarity is less obstructed. Slowly this changes as the child grows up and the tensions and attachments of ordinary life are created.

M: Would you suggest that parents who are practitioners teach their children dream yoga at an early age and encourage them to develop their dreams?

N: I don't think so. It's not so easy for children.

M: Is there a particular age when babies start to dream? **Or** is it something which starts immediately from birth?

N: I think they dream almost immediately.

M: There are occasions when we have a dream in which we are receiving advice that seems logical. Are we really getting advice?

N: Yes, there are again two possibilities. If your dream is linked with clarity you can really receive advice and truly useful information. On the other hand, if you have very strong tensions or attachments you might also receive advice in a dream, but you wouldn't say that this is perfect advice.

M: Can you give us an example of a specific dream you had that was linked with clarity?

N: Yes. Many years ago I had a friend in Italy. She was a good friend, a talented singer, and she was also interested in practice. This was not true of her family. Anyway, one night I dreamed that I was driving a car to Naples. Then I saw a red car heading towards me. When I looked closely, I recognized the driver—it was my friend and she seemed angry. I turned my car around and headed back to Rome and after a short time arrived in front of my building. My friend arrived a short time later. She no longer seemed angry, but instead said, "I want to thank you for your help." In my dream I gave her a watch from Switzerland. Then I looked at her again and she had no head. I was very surprised. I awoke feeling very strange. I tried to call her home but her mother answered, and said she had gone to Lugano, Switzerland. I asked her mother to give her the message to call me, but I didn't hear anything so I called again. Her mother told me that she had returned briefly from Lugano and then had gone off to Yugoslavia on a singing engagement. Her mother hadn't given her the message because she didn't approve of our friendship. When she returned from Yugoslavia she left again, this time for Naples. On the road she had a fatal car accident. This is an example.

M: Rinpoche, you had dreams in which you remembered a particular book of teaching. How does this work?

N: Such a dream is also a type of dream linked with clarity. In this type of dream one can do many things, such as study, read, or learn.

M: Can you give us some examples of dream symbols that Tibetans believe are important?

N: I will give you two possible interpretations of the same dream. If you are doing some purification practice, to dream that you are washing or taking a bath would be positive. It would indicate that your purification is succeeding and that you are developing your clarity.
If you are not practicing meditation and you have a dream like this, we would say watch out, for it might indicate that you are in danger of losing your money or wealth.

M: You have implied that when clarity develops in dreams, sometimes one can predict the future. Do you have any examples in your experience with your own dreams or those of your teachers?

N: If you develop your clarity you can certainly have these types of manifestations within dreams. Through these you may sometimes discover something about the future. Dreams of clarity are linked with our innate wisdom and the karmic seeds which we have created through our experience with meditation practice and the positive actions we perform within our life. In regards to the karmic seeds which we have accumulated, there is also the possibility that these potentials may become manifest. These potentials may become manifest when there are

secondary conditions[3] to ripen them. With the proper secondary conditions, manifestations such as dreams of the future may occur. We may find many examples of these manifestations in the biographies of meditation masters.

We ourselves can also have dreams like this, dreams that enable us to see or understand something. That is an aspect of a dream of clarity. For example, many years ago, in 1960, when I had been in Italy for only about one year, I had a dream where I was talking to someone, but I did not know who it was. This someone explained to me how the political situation would be after some time.

I was told that China and Russia would have concrete problems. I replied in the dream that this was impossible, because I knew that these two countries had a deep relationship—they both shared the same communist point of view. When I had been in China there was a Soviet Association that collaborated with the Chinese in publicity and communist education.

Thus I thought it was impossible that China and Russia would have problems. Still, the voice told me that there would be conflict between the two countries. It went on to say that not only will the Soviet Union and China have problems, but there will be friendship between the United States and China. I responded that this was impossible.

The voice said nevertheless it would happen because the situation between China and the United States is of a different nature than the relationship between the Soviet Union and China. The United States and China are both interested in business and commercial exchange. They have no problems arising from sharing a border, unlike China and the Soviet Union, because the United States and China are very far from one another. This was one of my dreams. The next day I recounted this dream to my collaborator, Geshe Jampa Sangye. He thought that this dream sounded very unlikely.

After a few months, we saw newspapers stating that China and the Soviet Union had serious problems. My friend Geshe was very surprised. Later he was even more surprised when the United States and China developed a better relationship. This dream is an example of a dream through clarity; the dream proves out in a real situation.

A principal way for practitioners to develop clarity in dreams is to succeed in doing the practice of the natural light. Through this, dream awareness comes. But not only awareness. By doing this practice we continue to develop dreams of clarity and diminish our ordinary dreams of bhakshas. Through developing dreams of clarity, awareness of dreams develops.

Thus one may use many methods of practice within the dream state. There are many techniques of practice we cannot easily employ during the daytime, because we have limitations on a physical level. Even if we have a good idea of how to do these techniques, they are still not so easy to apply. In dreamtime, however, we have no functioning of our sense organs, so we are not limited by the material body and thus can more easily apply many methods.

Through the experience of practice in the dream state, we can have a very strong experience and understanding of the dream-like nature of daily life. In this way we diminish our attachments and our tensions, and can truly understand what Buddha Shakyamuni meant when he said that everything is unreal and like an illusion or a dream. The result that attachment diminishes is due to the fact that attachment is based on a strong belief that the phenomena of this life are important and real.

M: One time I had a dream in which I received a ticket from the police for parking in the wrong place. I remembered the dream the next day and decided to be very careful. I made a point of putting money in the meter so that I would not get a ticket. As I walked around I kept aware of

the time so that I knew when to return to my car. However, when I got back to my car it was one minute after the meter had expired and I found a ticket exactly as I had seen in my dream. I had tried very hard to avoid this consequence. Is it possible to change the outcome of a sequence of events after having dreamed them a certain way?

N: Sometimes you can collaborate with your dream of clarity. It can become very useful for you in overcoming many problems. But changing events is not so easy because everything is linked with secondary causes. Sometimes they are very complicated secondary causes, and you cannot do very much. I told you the story of one of my friends in Italy. I had a very complicated dream about her, but I could not do anything. That is an example. Nevertheless, sometimes when we know that a dream says something about the future, we can modify our plans to avert a potential problem.

Once, when I was preparing to go to China on my second visit I had many bad dreams night after night. I was disturbed by these dreams and became concerned about traveling to China. Then my wife Rosa and son Yeshe went to the north of Italy for the holidays. My own plan was to leave for China. However, the day they left to go to the north of Italy they had a car accident.

That early morning I had had a bad dream that I was driving a car very fast. I was approaching a place where the road ends and tried to stop the car, but I couldn't, because I was going so fast. If I were to go ahead, I would fall off of a cliff. I did not know what to do and was very frightened. At that moment I recognized that I was dreaming and that the situation was unreal. Immediately I thought, "I must transform." Instantly I transformed the car into a horse. I was then riding on the back of a horse, a very big stone horse. I did not fall off the cliff. After I woke up, at breakfast, a student of mine came from Rome to drive me to the airport. I told him about my strange dream the night before, and that over the past few nights I had had bad dreams. Later, before I was to leave, I received a telephone call from Northern Italy. I heard that my wife Rosa and Yeshe had been in the accident.

I thought the dream corresponded to only their negative situation, which was not very dangerous. They were in the hospital, but it was not serious. I still intended to go to China and the next day I was to go to Rome. But that morning I had another negative dream. I half woke up. In this state between dream and wakefulness someone told me very clearly, "You must not travel." It was very clear. Then I woke up. I had thought someone was really talking, but I discovered the voice was a dream.

I changed my plans, and did not travel to China. I don't know what would have happened to me if I had gone that time. It is not easy to know what exactly was the problem. The only thing I could say is that one month later I heard news that in China and Lhasa they had put many people in prison, and some were killed because they were regarded as threats to communism. I don't know if this was the problem, or if it was perhaps related to the airplane. Sometimes it is possible to overcome ill fate by clarity in dreams; this is very useful.

M: Rinpoche, you have said that at the time of death one can use the awareness developed in the practice of natural light and in tantric dream practice. I have also heard it said that one's awareness becomes seven times as strong after death. Would you talk about how to liberate oneself at the time of death and how much experience a Westerner must have with lucid dreams to make it likely that he or she can accomplish this liberation? What are your ideas on this?

N: If you have had some dreams of clarity, you can have benefits and possibilities related to the teaching and the path. However, if you are interested in using the practice for liberation after death, then you must have transmission of the method, and teachings on this subject in your lifetime. As an example, let us discuss *shitro*,[4] what is called in the West *The Tibetan Book of the Dead.* It is a practice related to the peaceful and wrathful manifestations.

When you receive a transmission—a teacher's empowerment of a student to practice a specific method—then, through the power of that transmission, something is connected with your potential which, until then, is latent as an unmanifest karmic seed. Subsequently, you use your experience of practice in your lifetime. It means you are developing the possibility of the manifestation of your potentials.

A simple example of potential is a mirror. If you look in a mirror you discover it has infinite potential, beyond limitation. It could be a small mirror, yet even a small mirror can reflect a whole view of a countryside. The reflection is beyond the size of the mirror. Through the reflections you find in the mirror, you can discover its infinite potential; the reflection is very important for discovering that nature.

If in our lifetime we receive a transmission and then unify the power of that transmission through the power of mantra, and subsequently practice and prepare for the series of wrathful and peaceful manifestations of the shitro method which occur in the bardo of the nature of existence, before the ordinary bardo, then we have that possibility of that manifestation. Because we already have done preparation, we have the potential for this specific manifestation, and at the same time we recognize it is just our potential, nothing else.

When we recognize this through the transmission and through the method, then we can have real liberation. *Liberation* means entering into our real nature. No longer are we dependent on thoughts and judgments and conditioned karmic vision.[5]

When practitioners of the night die, they will have the possibility of liberation. For those who do not have the capacity to realize at the moment of death in this way, there is a return to the bardo of existence. Such a return means that once again we will be reborn and have the function of the mind and the consciousness of the senses, both very similar to their counterparts within the dream state. The difference is that within the dream state our functions of consciousness are not dependent on the material body and its sense organs. For this reason we have seven times the amount of clarity in the bardo than we have during our lives, as explained in Tantrism.

M: I have read many accounts of people in the West who have had lucid dream experiences. They can transform a nightmare into a peaceful situation or can overcome their fear in a dream. If they have never heard of the practices of Tantra and Dzogchen but have had experiences of lucidity and know enough to transform their negative dreams into positive circumstances, could they in the bardo of existence transform a wrathful manifestation into a positive one and achieve at least a favorable rebirth, if not complete liberation?

N: If one has the experience of transforming a bad situation into a peaceful situation in a dream, it only means that one has this experience in the dream. When one has the capacity of transforming bad into good or peaceful within a dream, it doesn't mean one also has that capacity in the bardo, after death.

If you want to be liberated you must have the power to connect with the awareness of your real nature. Your real nature is not a dualistic vision. Ideas of good and bad are linked with perception which is itself the result of our karma. Having knowledge of the bardo is another

situation. First you need a method to discover your potential, then you discover how your potential is beyond life and death, and beyond the limitations of your ordinary vision of good and bad. If you don't have this understanding of your real nature I don't think there is a possibility of liberating yourself in the bardo.

M: This brings us to the methods of Dzogchen, knowing one's true nature through direct transmission and the practice of dream and natural light. Can you say something about the practices of Dzogchen and how one receives transmission? How do Dzogchen practices lead to the capacity to liberate oneself at the time of death, or even to have experiences of clarity in the time of life? What is the relationship between all of the dream practices and all that we have talked about in terms of Dzogchen, that is, between the practices of the night and the awareness of Rigpa during the day?

N: The principle in Dzogchen teachings is knowledge. We need to understand our real condition. We can know this only through knowledge of our existence. For example, we say mind is one of our three existences—body, speech, and mind. It is also the root of the three existences. When we speak of mind, we mean mind as a relative condition, with which we think and judge. We are going deeper when we say *nature of mind*. But there is no way to discover nature of mind if we don't know what is the mind.

The mind is part of our relative condition, our existence of body, speech, and mind. When we discover the knowledge of our real condition in the Dzogchen teachings, we call it the state of Rigpa, or being in our real nature. This knowledge is the root of the practice of dreams also.

Dreams are a part of our life. In our life we have daytime and nighttime. In the nighttime we have confusion in our dreams; in daytime we have confusion with our mind—judging, thinking, creating many things. This is how we pass our life. Being aware or continuing our awareness in dreamtime means maintaining the same awareness we have during the daytime. If we have no capacity to be in the state of Rigpa, the state of real knowledge, in the daytime with practice of contemplation, we cannot have it in the nighttime either. It is the same principle. If we have at least this knowledge of Rigpa in the daytime with many experiences, then when we use this knowledge in the nighttime it will be easier to be in this state. We can have more experiences in dreamtime than daytime. So this is the relationship of practice to night experience.

M: Is it the same for Tantra?

N: Yes, in Tantra it is more or less the same as in Dzogchen.

M: I have heard it is essential to have transmission from a master to receive these practices, to understand them, to develop them. Must you also have a transmission from a master in order to develop the practices of dream awareness? It seems many people in the West have had experiences with lucid dreaming. What is the relationship between transmission and developing lucidity within the dream state? How essential is it?

N: If you want to have only a limited experience of dreams, to have awareness in dreamtime or even some clarity experiences, you can do so even if you receive no transmission. However, if you want to consider the dream experience as your path, to see how it affects you beyond your life, after death, and to use your dream practice to prepare for the bardo, then you must get

transmission. Otherwise you cannot go beyond, and have the possibility of using different methods of practice. People can eventually discover the meaning of a teaching, even if at the moment of transmission they do not understand. You need transmission for awareness. Awareness is related to our clarity and our energy. If you have a transmission there is a continuity, a possibility of repetition. For example, if you have had the transmission for Shitro practice during your lifetime, you have the possibility of its manifestation in the bardo.

M: If you read about these dream practices in a book could you practice even without transmission?

N: It depends. One person can have some results while someone else has none. There is no guarantee. But if you follow the transmission the precise way you can have many experiences.

M: So transmission itself does not lessen one's karma or create merit?

N: Everything is relative.

M: Rinpoche, there is a Dzogchen text by Mipham [Chapter 5 of this book] that explains the practice of awareness and contemplation. How can one deeply understand this text and apply it day and night?

N: When you read a book you can understand all concepts in an intellectual way. If you receive a transmission from a teacher, you can have a different taste.

M: Rinpoche, you seem to have a more informal method of transmission than many other lamas.

N: That is not my invention. This is the tradition of Dzogchen teachings. In Dzogchen there is a way to transmit. Analogously, a philosophy teacher, through the language of philosophy, transmits understanding and knowledge. This method works for people who are conditioned for it. People who are conditioned by the method of Tantra can receive transmission through ceremony. Simple people can receive a transmission through talking, like two people, two friends, together. This too is a way of transmission and understanding. The point is that one must experience real knowledge. Without that, one may receive hundreds of initiations and explanations, but they don't account for very much in the Dzogchen view.

M: Is it important to be aware that you are receiving a transmission?

N: It depends on who it is that receives the transmission. If someone is really prepared and has the capacity to receive transmission, then any way a teacher transmits could be very useful, and the person would benefit. If one is not prepared and has no capacity, then it is not easy to receive the transmission.

M: If someone receives transmission, but does not immediately understand, is there still a great value in receiving it, or is the value only in the understanding?

N: If someone receives a transmission but does not understand, then at the moment there is not very much benefit. When you receive a transmission and you wake up, really getting into a state of knowledge, then there will be benefits.

M: In the West there is at least one tradition which believes that all elements of a dream represent aspects or projections of the dreamer. They might ask a person to dramatize each element in order to gain information about the dreamer. What do you think about this?

N: We must distinguish between the dreams that originate from bhakshas and those that arise from clarity. If they are dreams originating from daily impressions, you can certainly learn about the dreamer's condition in the manner you describe. If the dreams originate in clarity, it is a different case; they are not only a projection.

M: What is the significance of walking or talking in one's sleep?

N: If people are sleeping very deeply and they have a dream associated with bhakshas, their preoccupations, they feel it is real and very concrete. They are very integrated with this condition. That's why they not only dream but also talk and walk. If you are really angry in a dream, you might also jump.

M: Sometimes it seems as if dreams are occurring in fast motion. Why does this occur?

N: There are two reasons. One is that in general our minds have no limitation. The mind functions very quickly. Sometimes in a very short time we can dream the actions of an entire day. Another is that dreams may be associated with agitation, and when we are agitated the dream becomes fast.

M: Is there any link between dreams and putting information into our memory?

N: It is possible to learn and even train yourself within the dream if you are aware.

M: When one sleeps in the Clear Light is there still dreaming?

N: If you sleep in the Clear Light then your dreams become more linked with clarity and much less linked with bhakshas. Your dreams become more clear and meaningful.

M: What is the difference between our dreaming state and our ordinary waking experience?

N: Waking experience is more concrete and linked with our attachment, whereas dreaming is slightly detached. We use the word *unreal* because in dreams we already have an idea or knowledge of the subject.

M: For a lama or a strong practitioner, is there any difference between dreaming and waking experience in an absolute sense?

N: Maybe if one can integrate one's experience completely, one can find the same principle and the same condition in both states. Then life really is a dream.

M: What relationship does the *mayic*[6] body, which is discussed in the *Six Yogas of Naropa*,[7] have to do with dreaming?

N: Dreaming is the principal path for realizing the mayic body. If you have experience of the mayic body you will easily understand how dreams function.

M: What is the value of developing your mayic body?

N: With a developed mayic body you have total realization of the unreal.

M: When one develops the capacity of the mayic body, is one able to project this body during the time one is awake as well as during sleep?

N: It is possible because one integrates everything.

M: If one receives a teaching or transmission in a dream, is this as valid as if one were awake and receiving a transmission?

N: If you are really aware in the dream state then it has the same value.

M: Would you say that in general *if* you are not lucid in your dream state when you receive a transmission, then this transmission is not of great value?

N: Sometimes a dream of transmission may indicate a disturbance of *jabo*,[8] for example.

M: Recently I had a dream that I was with a lama and he was explaining what another dream I had meant. Is this a dream of clarity?

N: It depends on what was explained and who was explaining. Such a dream is not always one of clarity. It could also be demons creating problems.

M: How can one distinguish between a dream of real transmission and one that is a disturbance?

N: It depends on your understanding and how you feel. As your clarity develops you will distinguish. If it is a disturbance you may feel upset the next day.

M: Can a teacher enter into his or her disciple's dreams? N: Yes.

M: Are there other unusual things that can occur in dreams or through them?

N: *Unusual* is a relative term, but I will relate several stories that may be illustrative. Once upon a time many, many years ago in east Tibet there was—and still is today—a province. There were two families who lived there, and they were related. One of the families had a daughter. Every

day she went to a mountain called Gundron.

Gundron is the home of an important guardian of this area. There is a particular rock on this mountain known to be the support of this local guardian. The young daughter went near the rock every day, bringing animals there to roam. When she arrived she would rest under an overhang of the rock while the animals, the dogs, and the sheep would graze. One day when it was raining, she went under the rock and fell asleep for a long time. In her dream she was near the rock with a young, very strong man. For her it seemed very real even though it was only a dream. They talked together and had sexual contact.

Later she woke up and found her experience to be a dream, but then after a few months she discovered that she was pregnant. Her parents were very surprised because there were no other men around where they lived. They were very remote from any other families.

After nine months she gave birth to a very strong baby. He grew up to be a special man. He was not nice-looking, but physically he was very strong. He built a house constructed of many big trees, and became very famous because he was so strong.

There was a king of Derge, in east Tibet, during this time, who had a problem with Mongolian invasions. The lord asked all the men of the region to come as soldiers to defend Tibet. The strong man became very famous because he conquered many Mongolian soldiers, and later became chief of the province. This story was written in a book that I read, about the history and origins of my mother's family. You would like to know if I believe this story? Oh yes. There are many similar family histories in Tibet. Such stories are not so very uncommon in the ancient history of Tibet.

Within the ancient Bonpo tradition there is frequently reference to the Tirang. The Tirang is a type of being, close to a human being, but not quite human. Tirang belongs to the class of Nyen.[9] Most local guardians are considered to be from the class of Nyen. Within the class of Nyen there are beings called Masang or Tirang.

These beings are considered close to human. As mentioned, there has been sexual contact between humans and Tirang, and generations have been formed. In fact there is another book about the history of the first Tibetan King. He came from East Tibet, from a region called Puel. According to this account, written by an eleventh-century Dzogchen master, there was a woman who had contact with a Tirang being and had children. One of these children was called Ouer. When the child was growing up, some Bonpo priests did divination and astrological calculations for discovering what kind of a child he was, because he had extraordinary powers. They were a little afraid of these powers. So they said that this could be a Tirang child, and that he must be taken out of their region or they could have problems. Subsequently, they did rites to draw away the Tirang and then they sent him outside of Fuel. Eventually he arrived in Central Tibet. At this time in Central Tibet there was no king. When the people discovered that the boy had extraordinary power, he was soon appointed the Tibetan King. He was called Pu-Gel. *Gel* means king and *Pu* means from the region of Pu-el. His name is widely known as the name of the first Tibetan king, but most people do not know the source of the name. The history book that I mentioned gives this story and other examples of contact between human beings and Tirang beings.

The next example occurred quite recently. I decided to go visit the place of the ancient Shang-Shung kings in Tibet. We had been traveling by cars, but just before arriving, we left our cars and arranged to go on by horse and yak. At the place where we stopped were some ancient ruins, for older than the ones destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. We put up our tents amidst these ruins. Many ruined structures surrounded us. Nearby was an intriguing heap of earth, and I

asked the local people what this place was. They said that in ancient times it was a Bonpo monastery called Shang-Shung Monastery. Since this was a very ancient monastery, no more information was available.

That night I had an interesting dream. In it there was a very nice temple with four doors facing the four directions. I entered through the eastern door. Inside was a gigantic statue of a yogi with three eyes. In his right hand was a *gyan-sen,* a victory flag. In his left hand was a *kapala*,[10] a skull cup. I went very close to the statue and noticed Tibetan writing under the yogi; it read "Tempa Namka". Tempa Namka was a famous Bonpo master of Shang-Shung. This was not the Tempa Namka of Tibet, who was one of Guru Padmasambhava's twenty-five disciples.[11] This was Tempa Namka of Shang-Shung, who is from a more ancient time than the other Tempa Namka.

In my dream, I left the temple through the western door. Outside were many chortens,[12] all around me. Suddenly my vision transformed back to my present vision; again there were only heaps of earth and no chortens.

I wondered what happened. I then turned back to see the temple, only to discover that it had vanished. All that remained were heaps of earth. I was surprised. I thought to myself: "There was once in the past a temple and many chortens here, which only exist as heaps of earth today." In my dream I was aware that this was an experience of clarity. Then I looked west at a heap of earth, the ruin of a chorten. There was a light coming from this chorten, similar to sunlight that reflects off a crystal or piece of glass. As I walked towards the light, it began to diminish. When I reached the chorten, the light had totally vanished, and there was a hole in the chorten. I thought, "There must be something interesting inside this hole," and put my hand inside. It was a very deep hole and I was able to put my whole arm inside up to my shoulder. Feeling an object inside the hole, I took it out. It was a garuda[13] statue of the ancient time of Tempa Namka; I was very happy with my find. However, I was aware that I was dreaming throughout this whole event. Then I woke up. It was time to pack our tents and I forgot my dream.

As people were packing up their horses and yaks I was filming the ruins. At a certain point, I found myself near the same heap of earth that had been the chorten where I found the garuda in my dream. At that moment I remembered my dream, and looked towards the chorten to see if there was any light. Although there was no light, I did see the hole. I put my hand in; it was not as deep as in my dream. I had to dig out the earth, breaking my fingernails in the process. When I had reached in almost up to my shoulder I felt something. I pulled out this object. It was a metal garuda, just as in my dream. It was very old. You can see a photo of it in the film we made of our journey in Tibet.

This event occurred near Mount Kailash[14] in Tibet during the summer of 1988. It is an example of how a dream relates to something concrete.

M: What are the ultimate results of doing the dream work?

N: If one is highly advanced one may cease to dream. If one is moderately advanced one will come to recognize that one is dreaming. At the least, if one practices, one's dreams will become more clear and positive.

M: Rinpoche, are you always lucid in your dreams?

N: Not always. It depends on the circumstances.

Notes To Chapter Four

1. Oddiyana: The location and existence of this country has long been debated by scholars. It has been variously placed in the Swat valley of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and western Tibet. Oddiyana is the reputed origin of both the Anuttara Tantras and the Tantras of Dzogchen, and is considered to be the birthplace of Padmasambhava. [return]

2. "A" Norbu Rinpoche describes practices that utilize the Tibetan syllable "A" in Chapter two of this book. [return]

3. Secondary conditions: The way in which primary conditions, or karmic seeds, might interact with secondary conditions to manifest a dream which seems to predict the future is explained below in a fictional example.

Due to misdeeds either within this life or within previous lives, most individuals have debts. These debts are karmic potentials that could result in the individual's injury or death when they are repaid.

In our example, an individual who is a strong practitioner of meditation and who has led a virtuous life takes his car to a mechanic to have the brakes repaired. Neither he nor the mechanic remembers that in a previous life he caused the mechanic personal injury.

Due to the force of the karmic seed, the mechanic unintentionally fails to fully repair the brakes. As the practitioner is driving, he subconsciously registers a subtle squeaking of the brakes. Due to his meditation practice, he generally remembers his dreams vividly, and that evening he dreams that he is in a car accident due to brake Mure. The next day he returns his car to the auto shop, and upon further inspection the brake defect is discovered before there is an accident.

In our story, both the subtle cue of the squeaking and the individual's experience in remembering his dreams are secondary conditions that help manifest the dream of what might have occurred. In the case of a very advanced practitioner of meditation, the secondary conditions may fall into the realm of what is ordinarily considered miraculous. [return]

4. Shitro or Kar-gling-zhi-tro, a terma of Karma Lingpa. The practice of the 58 wrathful and the 42 peaceful deities which may arise as visions during the chonyid bardo. Shitro, which is associated with the dying process, brings clarity to those who practice it and prepares them to overcome obstacles at death. It is also practiced by the living for the benefit of those who have recently died. The texts of this terma have become incorrectly known in the West as the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, due to the mistranslations by Evans Wentz. (See John Reynolds' *Self-Liberation Through Seeing with Naked Awareness*, p. 132, note 2.) The correct name of the two main texts is *The Bardo Thodrol* and *Liberation Through Hearing in the Intermediate State.* Ultimately there are six bardos or "intermediate states" corresponding to experiences from death to rebirth, including the after-death experience, all of which are described within the Shitro Terma. [return]

5. Karmic vision: According to the Buddhist theory of karma, our very perception is the result of previous actions which lead to incarnation in a realm where there is a shared "reality". Indeed,

the same environment may be perceived differently depending on one's "vision". According to a classic Buddhist example, a river which to a human being is seen as refreshing might be viewed as a river of molten lava by a hell dweller, while to a fish it is seen as its very atmosphere. [return]

6. Mayic body: The illusory body, developed through practicing one of the Six Yogas of Naropa. [return]

7. The Six Yogas of Naropa: These yogas were compiled by Naropa, a Mahasiddha of the Kagyud tradition, and include the following: The Yoga of Dumo (heat), the Yoga of the Mayic or illusory body, the Yoga of Milam (dreams), the Yoga of Light, the Yoga of the Bardo, and the Yoga of Phowa (transference of consciousness). [return]

8. Jabo: A powerful class of beings who cause obstacles such as illness when provoked. Norbu Rinpoche mentioned that this class of beings may create confusion within dreams. [return]

9. Nyen: A class of Dharma Protectors, often associated with a particular location such as a particular mountain or lake. [return]

10. Kapala: Ritual container often made from a human skull. The kapala is a ritual object from the Anuttaratantra. It represents compassion, as the blood of all sentient beings is symbolically carried inside of it. [return]

11. Guru Padmasambhava's twenty-five disciples: The chief Tibetan disciples of the great Master Padmasambhava during the time he taught the Dharma in Tibet. Each of the twenty-five disciples took a vow to take future rebirths in human form in order to discover Terma for the benefit of future practitioners. It is important to note that not all Termas come from Guru Padmasambhava; some also come from Vimalamitra, for example. [return]

12. Chorten, also called stupa: A monument whose design reflects the stages of the path to enlightenment. The interior of the chorten is often filled with religious relics. [return]

13. Garuda (Sanskrit) or *khyung* in Tibetan: A mythical bird resembling an eagle. In Tibet the garuda represents the fire element. It is also a manifestation of lightning. The garuda subdues the class of *nagas* (snake beings). The garuda or khyung is especially invoked to heal disease provoked by the nagas, such as skin diseases and different types of cancer. In the Hindu tradition the garuda is half human and half bird and is also the vehicle of the deity Vishnu. The garuda is related to the Thunder Bird or Fire Bird in other mythologies. [return]

14. Mt. Kailash: Located in West Tibet, Mount Kailash is the mountain most sacred to Tibetan Buddhists. It is considered an archetypal manifestation of the sacred mountain at the center of the world. It is also highly revered by Bonpos, Hindus and Jains. [return]

5 THE BUDDHA NO FURTHER THAN ONES'S PALM

Editor's note: The following is a previously untranslated text on the Dzogchen path. The author, the great Nyingma meditation master Mipham Rinpoche (1846-1914), has attempted to point out the "true nature of mind."

The Quintessential Instructions of Mind; The Buddha No Further Than One's Palm

I.
I bow to Padmasambhava, and to the glorious Lama who is the emanation of the wisdom being Manjushri[1] and like all the Buddhas and their sons.
To those desiring to learn the meditation of recognizing the profound meaning of the mind,
I will explain in brief, the beginning path of the pith instructions.[2]
It is initially necessary to rely on the quintessential instructions of a Lama who has the experience of realization.
If one does not enter into the experience of the Lama's instructions, Then all persevering and effort in meditation is like shooting an arrow in the dark. For this reason, renounce all corrupt and artificial views of meditation.
The pith point is placing one's awareness in the unfabricated, self-settled state; the face of naked wisdom which is separate from the shell of the mind i.e., that which identifies. By recognizing this wisdom, one reaches the essential point.
The meaning of 'abiding from the beginning' is the natural, unfabricated state.[3]
Having developed an inner conviction that all appearances are the essence of the Dharmakaya[4], do not reject this knowledge. Indulging in discursive explanations about the path is similar to chasing after a rainbow.
When meditative experiences arise as the product of awareness of the great unfabricated state, it is not through external focus, but rather through maintaining non-activity.[5]
Amazing, how one reaches this knowledge.

II.
At the fortunate time of reaching the intermediate state, One maintains the unwavering state continuously by recollection of the self-settled state of 'mind-itself.'
Just placing in that state is enough. The unfabricated mind is no other than this.
If obstructed by the arising clouds of mental analysis which create a distinction between the subject and object of meditation, at that time recall the nature of mind which from the beginning is unfabricated— 'mind-itself,' vast as the sky.
By relaxing, free tightness and dispel grasping to these conceptions.
Self-settled knowledge is not thoughts which flow in various directions. It is clear, radiant emptiness that is separate from all mental grasping. This state cannot be described by example, symbol, or words. One directly perceives ultimate awareness through discriminating wisdom.
The state of great impartial empty awareness has not moved, is not moving, and will not move. It is one's own face which is obscured by the stains of sudden conceptions; various delusory meanderings. How sad!
What will be obtained by grasping after a mirage? What is the purpose of following after these varied dreams?
To what benefit is grasping onto space?

By various concepts one turns one's own head around.
Put aside this exhausting meaninglessness and relax into the primordial sphere. The real sky is knowing that samsara and nirvana are merely an illusory display. Although there are multifarious displays, view them with one taste. By being intimate with meditation one can immediately recollect sky-like awareness which is naked, self-settled, vivid awareness, free from conception.
The natural mind is without knowing or not-knowing; happiness or anguish.
Bliss arises from this totally relaxed state.
At this time whether going or staying, eating or sleeping, one is continuously familiar with the state, and all is the path.
Thus the meaning of mindfulness is awareness similar to the sky. And even in the period after formal meditation one's conceptions are greatly reduced.

III.
At the fortunate time of the final state, with regards to the four occasions of going, staying, eating, and sleeping,[6] the habitual imprints, from which all conceptions arise, and the karmic winds of the mind are transformed. One possesses the capacity of resting back into the city of unmoving, innate wisdom. That which is called samsara[7] is mere conceptualization.
The great wisdom is free from all conceptualization. At this time whatever arises manifests as completely perfect. The state of great clear light is continuous—day and night. It is separate from the delineation of recollection and non-recollection, and from deviating from its own place through recollection of the all-pervading basic ground.
At this time one does not make accomplishment through effort. Without exception, the qualities of the paths and grounds: clairvoyance, compassion, etc., are self-arising;[8] increasing like the ripening grass in summer. Free from apprehension and conceit; liberated from hope and fear,
It is unborn, unending great happiness, expansive as the sky. This great yoga is like the playful Garuda in the sky of the impartial Great Perfection. Wonderful!
Having relied on the quintessential instructions of a teacher, the way to manifest this heart-essence wisdom, Is to accomplish the two accumulations of merit and wisdom[9] in a vast way like the ocean. And then, without difficulty realization will be placed in one's hand. Amazing!
Accordingly, may all sentient beings by the virtue of this explanation come to see the youthful Manjushri, who is the compassionate activity of one's own awareness; the supreme teacher, and diamond-essence the clear-light Dzogpa Chenpo. Having seen this, in this very life, may we attain perfect enlightenment.

Composed by Mipham Jamyang Dorje Rinpoche.
Translation by Khempo Palden Sherab, Khempo Tsewong Dongyal, Deborah Lockwood, Michael Katz

Notes To Chapter Five

1. Manjushri: the Bodhisattva of Wisdom. According to Buddhist mythology Manjushri was in a previous incarnation King Amba, who vowed to become a bodhisattva for the benefit of all sentient beings. [return]

2. Pith instruction: The lama's heart instruction. Condensed essential instruction for meditation presented by the lama to his heart disciples. [return]

3. Unfabricated state: The awareness arising at the instant of perception; pure presence arising without correction, and uncreated by causes. For additional information, see *The Cycle of Day and Night* by Namkhai Norbu. [return]

4. Dharmakaya: *Dharma* means the whole of existence; *kaya* means the dimension of that. The essential ground of being whose essence is clarity and luminosity and within which all phenomena are seen to be empty of inherent existence. [return]

5. Meditative experience arising through non-activity: The meditation of Dzogchen is non-conceptual and only accomplished by the effortless recognition of one's true unconditional nature. Activity or efforts to accomplish meditation are contrary to the relaxed presence of Dzogchen practice. [return]

6. Going, staying, eating, or sleeping: The all-inclusive four activities within which a Dzogchen practitioner strives to maintain awareness. [return]

7. Samsara: Cyclic existence marked by birth, old age, sickness, death, and rebirth. Governed by desire, hatred, and ignorance, sentient beings continue to migrate throughout the six realms of samsara the realms of the gods, demi-gods, humans, animals, hungry ghosts, and hell beings according to their karma. [return]

8. Self-arising qualities: As a natural consequence of Dzogchen meditation advanced practitioners may develop transcendent qualities such as great wisdom, compassion, clairvoyance, etc. [return]

9. The two accumulations: The accumulation of merit through good deeds and the accumulation of wisdom through contemplation. Though both are important on the path of the Dharma, the Buddha said that if one could maintain the state of contemplation the accumulation of wisdom for the time it takes an ant to walk from the tip of one's nose to one's forehead, this would be more beneficial than a lifetime of accumulation of good merit through virtuous action and generosity. 10. Mipham Rinpoche: the famous nineteenth-century Tibetan Buddhist master and scholar, originally a student of Patrul Rinpoche Mipham, who wrote original commentaries on Dzogchen and other important Buddhist scriptures. [return]

6 BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF NAMKHAI NORBU

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche was born in East Tibet, on the eighth day of the tenth month of the Earth-Tiger year 1938. His father was a member of a noble family and sometime official with the government.

When he was two years old, he was recognized by two meditation masters as the reincarnation of Adzom Drugpa. Adzom Drugpa, one of the great Dzogchen masters of the early

part of this century, was the disciple of the first Khyentse Rinpoche and also the disciple of Patrul Rinpoche. Both of these illustrious teachers were leaders of the Rimed or non-sectarian movement in nineteenth-century eastern Tibet. Adzom Drugpa became a terton, or discoverer of hidden treasure texts, having received visions directly from the incomparable Jigme Lingpa 1730-1798 when the former was thirty. Adzom Drugpa subsequently became the master of many contemporary teachers of Dzogchen. Among them was Norbu Rinpoche's paternal uncle, Togdan, who became Norbu's first Dzogchen teacher.

When he was eight years old, Norbu Rinpoche was additionally recognized by both the sixteenth Karmapa and the then Situ Rinpoche to be a reincarnation of the illustrious Drugpa Kagyu master Padma Karpo 1527-1592, the historical founder of the state of Bhutan.

From the time he was eight years old until he was fourteen, Norbu Rinpoche attended monastic college, made retreats, and studied with renowned teachers including the woman master Ayu Khandro 1838-1953. At this time she was already one hundred and thirteen years old and had been in a dark retreat for some fifty-six years. Norbu Rinpoche received numerous transmissions from her which he subsequently practiced in intensive retreat.

In 1954 he was invited to visit the People's Republic of China as a representative of Tibetan youth. From 1954 he was an instructor in Tibetan language at the Southwestern University of Minor Nationalities at Chengdu, Sichuan, China. While living in China he acquired proficiency in the Chinese and Mongolian languages.

When he was seventeen years old, returning to his home country of Derge following a vision received in dream, Norbu Rinpoche came to meet his Root Master, Changchub Dorje, who lived in a remote valley to the east. A practicing physician, Changchub Dorje Rinpoche headed a commune consisting entirely of lay practitioners, yogins and yoginis. From this master, Norbu Rinpoche received additional initiations into, and transmission of, the essential teaching of Dzogchen. More importantly, according to Norbu this master introduced him directly to the experience of Dzogchen. He remained with him for almost a year, often assisting Changchub Dorje Rinpoche in his medical practice and serving as his scribe and secretary.

After this, Norbu Rinpoche set out on a prolonged pilgrimage to Central Tibet, Nepal, India, and Bhutan. Returning to Derge, the land of his birth, he found that deteriorating political conditions had led to the eruption of violence. Traveling on, first to Central Tibet, he finally emerged in Sikkim. From 1958 to 1960 he lived in Gangtok, Sikkim, employed as an author and editor of Tibetan textbooks for the Development Office of the Government of Sikkim. In 1960, when he was twenty-two years old, at the invitation of Professor Giuseppe Tucci, he went to Italy and resided for several years in Rome.

From 1964 to the present, Norbu Rinpoche has been a professor at the Istituto Orientale, University of Naples, where he teaches Tibetan language, Mongolian language, and Tibetan cultural history. He has done extensive research into the historical origins of Tibetan culture, investigating little-known literary sources from the Bonpo tradition. In 1983, Norbu Rinpoche hosted the first International Convention on Tibetan Medicine, held in Venice, Italy. Although still actively teaching at the university, for the past ten years Norbu Rinpoche has informally conducted teaching retreats in various countries. During these retreats, he has given practical instruction in Dzogchen practices in a non-sectarian format, as well as taught aspects of Tibetan culture, especially Yantra Yoga, Tibetan medicine, and astrology. Norbu Rinpoche is also the author of more than ten books on Dzogchen meditation, including *The Crystal and the Way of Light* and *The Cycle of Day and Night.*

The above information was largely extracted by John Reynolds from a biography in Tibetan, and revised by the editor.

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PHILOSOPHY/RELIGION
BUDDHISM/DREAMWORK/PSYCHOLOGY

Namkhai Norbu is a Tibetan master of the Dzogchen tradition. He is a professor at the Oriental Institute of the University of Naples, Italy. He has authored many books including *The Crystal and the Way of Light*, *The Cycle of Day and Night* and *Yantra Yoga*.

Michael Katz is a psychologist and certified Yantra Yoga instructor who has lectured widely on lucid dreaming. He has practiced Tibetan Buddhism and Dzogchen since 1974.

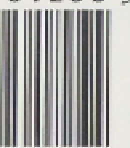
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In *Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light*, Norbu Rinpoche gives instructions for developing clarity within the sleep and dream states. He goes beyond the practices of lucid dreaming that have been popularized in the West, by presenting methods for guiding dream states that are part of a broader system for enhancing self-awareness called Dzogchen. In this tradition, the development of lucidity in the dream state is understood in the context of generating greater awareness for the ultimate purpose of attaining liberation.

Also included in this book is a text written by Mipham, the nineteenth-century master of Dzogchen, which offers additional insights into this extraordinary form of meditation and awareness.

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